

No. 40

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S TRAP-SHOOTING OR UP AGAINST THE CHAMPIONS OF THE GUN-CLUB



By MAURICE STEVENS

Unarmed, Lafe was really in serious trouble, when Jack, impulsively seizing a little twenty-two target rifle, took a snap-shot that disarmed the young ruffian.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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Price Five Cents.

Jack Lightfoot's Trap-Shooting; OR, UP AGAINST THE CHAMPIONS OF THE GUN CLUB.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, but a good friend of Jack's.

Nat Kimball, an undersized fellow, whose hobby was the study of *ju-jitsu*, and who had a dread of germs.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Bob Brewster, a brawny lad, against whom Kimball tried his Jap tricks with poor results.

Phil Kirtland, leader of the Academy boys, and Jack's rival in all sports.

Brodie Strawn, Kate's brother.

Jubal Marlin, a Yankee boy whose one passion was to make money.

Katie Strawn, a girl whose good opinion Jack desired, and who proves to be a real heroine.

Reel Snodgrass, who came from India, and knew many tricks that were dark.

Ray Gilbert, captain of the Champion Gun Club.

Buckstone Rogers, a young scamp who creates considerable trouble for the good people of Cranford.

CHAPTER I.

"JOHNNY LIGHTFINGERS."

"Wow! Here's for fun!"

The squalling yell ran out through the streets of Cranford, where already a flaming torch hoisted beside a dry-goods box was drawing attention to the fakir who had mounted to the top of the box.

"Wow!" Jubal Marlin yelled back. "Fun's what hits me. That's what I'm lookin' fer."

He made his way, with other young fellows, in the direction of the torch.

Soon he saw Jack and Tom Lightfoot come from a side street and move in the same direction.

"That feller's drawin' 'em; we'll have the hull blame football team hyer in a minute!"

Jubal's eyes were shining as he hastened toward the fakir, who had already begun his "patter" to the crowd that was collecting.

Jubal, with Ned and Nat and the others, joined Jack

and Tom Lightfoot, and to the crowd were soon added Lafe Lampton and Bob Brewster.

Then Wilson Crane came up, boring into the crowd and thrusting his long nose at the fakir, as if he desired to test the quality of his goods by smelling them.

"I've seen that fellow in Cardiff," Jubal heard Jack Lightfoot say to his cousin Tom.

Thereupon Jubal looked more closely at the young man on the box.

He saw a dark, keen face under a head of shaggy, football hair.

For clothing, the fakir wore a loud plaid suit and a heavy coat, while a flaming red necktie shone at his throat. The weather was cool and he needed the heavy coat for protection.

"This way, gentlemen," the fakir was crying. "Come and see me, everybody! I don't know you, and you don't know me; but I'm Johnny Lightfingers; and I'm here to entertain you, and then to fill up my depleted exchequer by making a few sales of a very desirable article that each of you will want to buy. For fear you may crowd so hard against me that I couldn't stand it, if I should tell you at once what I'm to offer for sale, we'll first have a few little songs, and some lively tricks of legerdemain; and then, when you're feeling so good that you'll want to give five dollars to your worst enemy I'll open up my sale. Oh, that isn't a joke, gentlemen! I'm from Baltimore, originally; came away for the benefit of my health, and the good of that beautiful town. So I'll sing you a little ditty—of my native city."

He took up a guitar and began to strum it:

"I'm going back, back, back to Baltimore.
This acting business cert'nly makes me sore.
A black-face song, or a minstrel joke,
Won't entice this foolish moke;
I never cared so much for home before.
They said we'd stop at swell hotels galore;
We only stopped at them outside the door.
The next man says I'm talented,
I'll put a dent right in his head!
If I get back to Bal—ti—more."

He had a good voice, and the song, as he sang it, was worth hearing.

The crowd was augmenting fast.

Of those who came up was Reel Snodgrass.

He listened for a moment to some of the fakir's statements, and then hurried away, to return a few minutes later.

When he returned he pushed into the crowd where Jack and his friends were standing.

There were others, of the songs popular at the time:

"Under the Old Apple Tree," "My Irish Molly, Oh," and the like.

When the fakir had put the crowd into a good humor by his singing, he laid down the guitar.

"Now we'll have a few little tricks by Johnny Lightfingers, just for the purpose of making you feel so good that you'll throw money at me in great green wads when I begin my evening sale. Gentlemen, I wouldn't do anything but sing to you and play tricks for you, all evening, if it wasn't necessary for me to have a little money—just a small quantity—to grease the financial wheels of this show and keep them from getting so rusty that they wouldn't run at all. That's a fact, good people. I'm a philanthropist; but I'm poor, and so, instead of giving away money, my necessities compel me to collect money. Perhaps I'll give it away later—when my mind weakens with old age, like Carnegie's."

The people were crowding close up against him now, to see whatever was to be seen; and in the very front rank were Jubal Marlin and Reel Snodgrass.

Reel was eying him intently, and Jubal's face had expanded in a smile of vast delight.

"Ah! I see that I've struck the right crowd! Good people, there's money in this crowd!"

He reached over and combed a silver half-dollar out of Jubal's hair.

Jubal had his cap pushed back and a mop of hair hung over on his forehead.

"Say," said the fakir, holding up the half dollar and staring at Jubal, "young man, can't you find a better place than that to carry your wealth about in? And, I'm a sinner, if there isn't more!"

He pulled a dollar bill from under the visor of Jubal's cap.

"Hold on! Hold on!" yelled Jubal, good-humoredly, at the same time staring hard at the money. "Don't go tew robbin' me right here in this crowd, by gravy."

He took off his cap and looked into it, as if he half expected to see more money there.

It was known that Jube was a dear lover of money, and spent a good part of his time scheming in various ways how to obtain it; and the crowd roared.

"Why, there's a lot more!" cried the fakir, and, reaching forward, he pulled a five-dollar bill out of the cap, right under Jube's nose.

"Say, by hemlock, I'd like ye tew teach me haow tew do that!" said Jubal.

"Why, you could have pulled it out of there yourself; why didn't you?"

"I didn't see it."

"But you saw me get it out of there!"

The fellow was laughing; he thought Jubal a green countryman who really believed that the money had been found in his cap.

"Say," said Jube, willing to continue the joke, "if yeou tuck that aout of my cap, I reckon it's mine; and I'd like tew have it. I'm needin' it."

He held up his hand for it, and the fakir appeared to take a silver half dollar right out of it.

"Oh, thanks!" he said, while Jubal looked bewildered. "That's an extra present, is it? Thanks awfully."

"And here's a dollar—right out of the collar of this young gent," the fakir added, reaching toward Reel.

As the fakir's long fingers went toward Reel's collar, Reel threw up his hand with a quick gesture, as if to prevent it.

There was a sudden cry of pain from Johnny Lightfingers.

He drew back his hand with a quick motion, while the dollar he had "palmed" and meant to pull from Reel's collar fell to the ground.

As the fakir's hand came into view, a small turtle was seen hanging to it, having, apparently, fastened itself to the fakir's forefinger.

It was not a real turtle, but it so closely resembled one that the whole crowd was deceived. Even Jack and Tom Lightfoot thought at first it was a turtle.

The fakir was himself so astonished that he actually turned pale.

He gave his hand a shake to dislodge the "turtle," but it held on, and was flapped round his hand.

Then the fakir's face grew as red as a beet. He saw now that this was a "fake" turtle, and that he had been "sold."

The spectators, discovering the same thing, yelled hilariously.

They knew that Reel Snodgrass had few equals as a sleight-of-hand performer, and they rejoiced that he had "tricked" the trickster.

Reel stood before the fakir smiling broadly, while the latter, reaching up with his other hand, disengaged the "turtle" from his fingers. Its sharp jaws, closed by a spring, had cut till the blood flowed.

He stared at Reel, looked at the fake turtle, and then forced a laugh.

"Good people, I meant turtle, when I said dollar! This young gentleman seems to have a turtle farm somewhere on his person."

"Try again!" said Reel, smiling. "Maybe you'll dig up a dollar next time."

"And maybe I'll dig up a diamond-back rattlesnake!"

He looked hard at Reel.

"Is it right," he laughed, "to thus expose one of the profession? I'll have to hire you to travel with me as a partner."

He could not conceal his chagrin.

But a moment later, having successfully pulled a silver half dollar out of the ear of a gawking boy who stood staring open-mouthed at him, his hilarity and high spirits apparently returned.

"I'll take the turtle," said Reel.

"Call on me at my hotel, after the show is over. Perhaps I'll conclude to keep it, as the spoils of war. Gracious, I'll have to use some of my famous Electric Liniment for that!"

He grabbed up a bottle, pulled the cork, and poured some of the contents on his finger.

"Ah! good people, that's the stuff! Now you see the blood disappear—you see the pain disappear. It's as well as ever."

He held up the finger. Apparently, it was.

"We had our little joke on you, you see! That was just a part of my plan to introduce my famous Electric Liniment. You saw my injured finger. It was bitten by a turtle; a genuine bite, for you saw the blood flow. I have healed it—cured it completely. And, good people, that is what I am here for—to heal you! Good for all injuries, all aches and pains, rheumatism, sciatica, stings of insects, sunburn—everything, in fact, for which a remedy can be applied. All pain yields to the Electric Liniment. And, good people, this is no joke. Examine my finger."

He held it forth.

"Have you aches and pains of body, here's the stuff for you. It will heal any old thing—will wipe the creases of care from your face, cure the stings of conscience, knit up a broken heart, cure sorrow, heal anything, in fact, good people, but a broken leg or a broken pocketbook. And only twenty-five cents a bottle. Who'll have the first bottle?"

There seemed to be people in Cranford willing to invest in anything that came along, and for a time the fakir was busy pulling in the quarters.

When trade slackened, he sang some more songs; and, Jubal being still close up against the dry-goods box, he once more began to find things hidden about Jubal's anatomy.

He snatched off Jube's cap.

"Here, gimme that cap!" Jube roared, in pretended wrath.

"Wheels in his head, as I live!" cried the fakir, pulling a queer collection of brass wheels out of the cap.

He stared at Jubal, while the people yelled.

"Say, do you live in a brass foundry?"

"If I did yeou wouldn't need tew call on me—yeou've got brass enough!"

"And here——"

He stared into the hat.

"As I live, good people!"

He drew out a small bottle of whisky, and a rabbit foot, and held them up.

He looked at Jube.

"Now, who would have thought it? Look at him—notice the innocent smile on his face; and yet, see that!"

"By granny, if yeou don't give 'em back tew me I'll hammer yer head off!" yelled Jube.

But he had grown very red in the face; for there was a time, as all knew, and it was not so very far in the past, when Jube was a member of the Gang and rather liked a drink of what he had called "good red likker."

The fakir tried now to sell some more of his Electric Liniment.

When the crowd was "all supplied," he brought out a reddish-looking, oily substance, composed of oil and emery, which he began to "boom" as a wonder for sharpening anything, from a razor to a scythe blade.

"Some of you fellows go to school. Buy this to sharpen your minds. It will make them so bright and keen that you can cut through the hardest sum in arithmetic just like a dull knife going through a piece of soap. Have you bad digestion; this will put such teeth in your stomach that you can digest a grindstone. It will put an edge on your tongue whenever you get into a quarrel and need one that is sharp. Good people, it will sharpen anything—bowie knives, butcher knives, table knives; even rub it on your children, and they'll be so bright that their neighbors won't know them. Now, who'll have the first box?"

Apparently some of the people of Cranford needed brightening and sharpening, for they bought this stuff fully as well as the liniment.

CHAPTER II.

JUBAL AGAIN IN SEARCH OF INFORMATION.

The next day it became known that Johnny Lightfingers was from Cardiff, the big, bustling, manufacturing city distant a few miles from Cranford.

That was his home, it seemed, from which he made excursions now and then to adjoining places, extending his trips occasionally into other States and remoter sections.

All this was learned from Reel Snodgrass, who gave the further information that the real name of Johnny Lightfingers was Buckstone Rogers, and that he was ordinarily called Buck Rogers.

He had gone to Reel's rooms—they were Delancy Shelton's rooms, really—at the Cranford Hotel, after his street performance.

Reel's cleverness in snapping the mechanical turtle on his finger had told him that Reel was a youth who knew something in his own line and was worth knowing.

So he hunted Reel up, returned the turtle to him, and had a hearty laugh with Reel and Delancy, as well as some drinks at Delancy's expense.

As a friend of Reel Snodgrass, he made the acquaintance of Phil Kirtland and Brodie Strawn.

Later he met Jack and Tom Lightfoot, and Lafe Lampton and Jubal Marlin, and tried to "jolly" Jubal about the money combed out of his hair and pulled out of his cap.

"Well, b'jigs, if a feller could do that fer true, 'twould be wu'th while. 'Twould sort o' make a feller feel rich, jist tew be able tew do it. And next tew bein' rich, I reckon feelin' rich is the best thing a feller could land up agin'."

Buck Rogers shot him a keen glance.

"Ten cents' worth of good whisky will sometimes make a fellow feel rich as a king."

"Speakin' frum yeou're own experience, I reckon," remarked Jubal, dryly.

The other fellows laughed, for the manner in which Buck Rogers colored told that the shot had gone home.

"I'll give yeou a dollar tew teach me the trick of gittin' money aout of a cap that ain't got any in it."

"Oh, Reel can show you that; he knows more tricks now in five minutes than I do in half an hour. Tackle him, when you get the chance."

Jubal Marlin "tackled" Reel at the first good opportunity.

He had been wanting to have a talk with Reel on a kindred subject for a good while.

Reel Snodgrass was now a member of the same foot-

ball team to which Jubal belonged—the Cranford Eleven.

This was the combined team, picked from both Cranford schools, which went against the league teams of the surrounding country.

There were two football teams in Cranford, in addition to this—one belonging to the high school, and captained by Jack Lightfoot, the other belonging to the academy, and captained by Phil Kirtland. Jubal belonged to the high school eleven, and Reel Snodgrass to the eleven at the academy.

Twice already these two elevens had met on the home gridiron and played some of the best games of the season.

So far the honors were even—the high school winning one game and the academy the other.

But that was not what was in Jubal's mind when he sought Reel Snodgrass now; his thoughts were concerned with the Cranford eleven, and himself.

"Great codfish, where yeou been keepin' yeoursel' all the time?" was the way he greeted Reel, when next he met him.

"You haven't hunted for me hard, I guess," said Reel.

"Hain't I? Been lookin' fer ye more'n a week."

He smiled as he thus exaggerated.

"It's abaout that new feller—Buck Rogers, or, ruther, abaout something he made me think of, though I been thinking of it some ever sence yeou've been on the Cranford eleven."

"Come up to my rooms," said Reel.

They were walking along the street, and the air was cold.

So they turned into the Cranford Hotel and went up to the rooms which Reel at times occupied there.

He stayed more at Mr. Snodgrass'—his uncle's—than formerly, for it had been shown to him that this was advisable; yet he still spent a night now and then in these rooms, and made them his loafing headquarters.

To Jubal's relief, Delancy Shelton was not in.

There was a bottle on the table, which Delancy had apparently been "sampling."

"Have a drink," Reel invited, taking it up and pouring a small quantity into a glass.

Jubal looked thirstily at the "red likker" in the glass.

His face flushed slowly and he shoved his hands deep into his pockets, as if trying to get a grip on himself, and stiffened in his chair.

"Nope," he said, "I cal'late I'd better not. Thank yeou, jist the same."

"Why not?"

"Well, yeou see, it ain't good fer a feller."

"Who says so? Jack Lightfoot?"

"He ain't said nothin' tew me abaout it—I jist know it. I cal'late I won't tech it this mornin'."

"Just as you please."

Reel drank the liquor he had poured out.

"You wanted to see me about something?"

He dropped into a chair.

"Yep. That sleight-o'-hand performance made me think abaout it—that, and what yeou done with that gol-darn little turtle."

He laughed heavily, and mopped his face with his handkerchief.

"That was a good un. Well, yeou heard what I said tew that feller, Buck Rogers, abaout gittin' him to teach me haow to draw greenbacks aout of places where there ain't any."

"Just a trick."

"Yes, I know 'tis."

"It's simple enough, but it takes a lot of practice; a fellow has got to be as quick as lightning, to do it successfully. He has the money palmed in his hand, but he moves his hand so quickly that he fools your eyes—you don't see the money until he's ready for you to see it."

"But it ain't that."

"No?"

"It's this hipnotin' business that you know so gol-darned much abaout. That ain't no trick, by gum, fer yeou tried it on me once, and I know."

Reel flushed, but laughed.

"Do you want me to try it on you again?"

"I do—nit. But I'd like to know haow tew work it on other people."

"What for?"

Jubal laughed nervously.

"Well, I was thinkin' abaout football, yeou know. Seems tew me it would be great. F'r instance, if yeou c'd hypnotize the rush line of the other fellers, and make 'em believe that aour rush line would hold anything—jist couldn't be broke, yeou know—we could plaow through 'em like, as that feller said, a dull knife goin' through soap. We c'd win every time."

"So, that's your idea?"

Reel took out some cigarettes.

"Have a smoke," he said, and passed Jube one.

"Don't mind if I dew!"

Jube scratched a match on his shoe heel and "fired up."

"That's my idee—to make the Cranford eleven invincible. That's a big word fer me, but it's what I

mean. Yeou can do hypnotin' great, and I know it, and there ain't nary other feller here can."

"There's Jack Lightfoot. He knows something about it, for I taught him."

The look that came into Reel's face was caused by memory of a time when Jack, whom he had taught, had used his knowledge to get from him a damaging secret.

"But Jack wouldn't do it," said Jubal.

"Too honest, is he?"

Reel sneered, for, though he was supposed to be now on the best of terms with Jack, there were certain things which still rankled.

"Well, I know he wouldn't."

"But yeou're not too good to?"

"I ain't too good to dew anything that honest—and I don't see why that ain't honest. Football's war; and in war the thing to dew is to git every advantage yeou can of the enemy. Ain't that so? When two nations air fightin', they don't stop tew ask questions abaout little things."

"That's so."

"And football's war."

"Well, it's as near to fighting as anything I ever got into."

"Same here. So, what do yeou say?"

"Oh, I don't know. Jack Lightfoot would make a kick. I don't want any trouble with him."

"Well, then, teach it tew me."

"You'd try it?"

"I'd like tew know how tew do it, anyhaow. Why, we could so hypnotize the quarter-back of the other eleven that he'd call the signals wrong and tangle up the whole team. Think how funny it would be, if he signaled fer the right half-back tew do something, and then give the ball to some one else? Er if yeou had the feller that was to kick-off for the other team at the openin' of the game so buck-eyed that he'd kick the ball straight into the hands of one of aour men who was standing at the end of the line waitin' fer it. Er if yeou had the captain of the oppersition so hypnotized that he'd do wrong things all the time. It would be wads o' fun, and aour team would rake in every game."

It was a funny combination Jube drew, and Reel laughed as his imagination pictured it.

"You're a schemer, Jube; but I think you'd better stick to making dollars."

"It wouldn't work?"

"It would be hard to do it; and, then, I don't want to lose my place on the Cranford eleven. As long as

we've got such a nice little fellow as Jack for captain we've got to walk chalk."

Jubal reddened.

He had come to like Jack Lightfoot, and more than once had sided with him against Reel. On any other occasion he would have taken serious offense at the flippant statement made by Reel.

But Jubal made it a point never to become angry with anyone he was trying to "work."

So he kept his temper.

Yet he went away without accomplishing anything, and felt his loss more keenly when he saw, almost at the foot of the outer steps, Buck Rogers, who was walking along with some young fellows of the town.

CHAPTER III.

THE INSULT TO KATE STRAWN.

Buck Rogers found Cranford such a pleasant place and the company of Reel Snodgrass and Delancy Shelton so delightful, that he tarried there several days.

What passed in the seclusion of Delancy's rooms at the hotel after nightfall the public did not know, nor question about; but, with an author's privilege of knowing all things, I can say, for the enlightenment of the reader, that playing poker for money was the chief diversion.

Delancy fancied that he knew the great American game of poker.

Perhaps he did, but by superior playing, combined with much cheating, Buck Rogers managed to make a large hole in Delancy's always well-filled purse.

Buck Rogers seemed to have a great "thirst," and as Delancy always kept liquors of various kinds in his room Buck found ample opportunity to quench it.

Buck had, in the meantime, made the acquaintance of Kate Strawn.

It was not Kate's fault.

She had been on the street one afternoon with Phil Kirtland, and, meeting Buck, Phil had given them a formal introduction, without thinking at the time whether this were the proper thing or Kate would be pleased with it.

Kate always tried to meet everyone pleasantly, and, though she did not like the looks of the young fellow who had been thus introduced—she said so as soon as she and Phil were again together alone—she spoke pleasantly, and even laughed merrily at some of Buck's remarks and compliments.

That was enough for Buck Rogers, who happened to be one of those fellows who fancy that every girl who

speaks gayly, or even pleasantly, to them, is "stuck on them," as he would have put it.

As a matter of fact, Kate knew she detested him as soon as she saw him, and was half angered against Phil on account of that street introduction.

The next evening, shortly before dark, Buck Rogers chanced to encounter Kate down by the boathouses, near the lake.

She was alone, so far as he could see.

Though she tried to move on, and pretended that she did not see him, he came up to her, lifting his cap.

"Glad to see you!" he said.

"Oh, is that you?" she said, with a little shiver, for his manner and tone frightened her.

She tried to pass on.

"Just a minute," he urged, detaining her.

"I'm in a hurry, please," she panted, looking about to see if anyone were near.

He had already ascertained that no one else was in sight.

"Just a minute," he begged.

She looked at him now with flashing eyes. His manner, as well as his breath, told her that he had been drinking, and she was afraid of him.

"Let me pass," she said, as firmly as she could.

He stared at her coarsely, and barred her way.

"Don't be in a hurry! You're so—so deuced handsome this evening that I can't let you go just yet."

She was handsome, superbly handsome, with her dark cheeks glowing and her dark eyes flashing. She wore a cloak that had a red lining, and the wind having blown back the ends revealed the red. It was the needed color to add to the effectiveness of the picture of girlish beauty which she presented.

"Let me pass," she demanded.

He swayed toward her, for the liquor had gone to his heels as well as to his head.

Instead of letting her pass, he came up to her, and when she tried to put her head down and rush by him he threw an arm round her shoulders.

"A kiss, my beauty, before you go!"

She tried to push him away.

He caught her hand, and, bending over, kissed her squarely on the lips.

A cry of rage and shame came from her.

"Let me go!" she commanded, fiercely.

"Oh, no, not just yet!"

He dropped his arm to her waist, and held her closely, and with the other hand caught the hand with which she struggled to tear that arm away.

"You don't go just yet—see! You're in my power

down here, see! And I'll have as many kisses from those ruby lips as I want to."

She was wild with terror.

"Let me go—let me go!" she panted, struggling in his strong arms.

"Oh, no, my beauty! Oh, no! I've got you, and I'll keep you here as long as I want to. Another kiss!"

He stooped to get it, while a scream of fright and pain broke from her lips.

Suddenly a form came leaping round the end of the boathouse.

Kate screamed again, for she saw it was Jack Lightfoot.

Jack had been inside the high school boathouse, which was near by, with the door closed, for the afternoon was cool.

He had not known that either Kate or Buck Rogers was there, but he had heard Kate's scream.

He did not stop to ask any questions.

He saw Kate struggling in the arms of the half-intoxicated young villain. With a leap, and a swing of his right hand, he landed a blow against the side of Buck Rogers' head.

The blow fairly lifted Buck up against the boathouse door, and broke his hold on Kate Strawn.

Jack sprang at him again.

"You villain!" he yelled, for he was wild with rage.

Kate, as a result of the sudden reaction, felt that she was almost fainting.

She swayed giddily; and then saw Jack strike Buck again.

"I'll settle with you for this!" Buck yelled.

"Settle right now!" said Jack.

Buck tried to draw a knife, which Jack knocked from his hand. Jack's brain was on fire and for an instant he was in a murderous mood. With a great effort he recovered himself. He put his hand to his head, as if crowding down the emotions that burned there; then turned to Kate, catching her by the arm.

"Help—help me home, Jack," she begged, tearfully.

Jack took her home.

As they passed round the boathouse Buck Rogers bellowed after them:

"Remember, Lightfoot, I'll settle with you for this!"

"All right," was Jack's answer. "I'd like a little further settlement of it myself."

CHAPTER IV.

RIDDEN ON A RAIL.

That night there was "something doing" in the town of Cranford.

Jack Lightfoot was not in it, and knew nothing about it until it was over.

Instead of meeting Jack for a "settlement," Buck Rogers had kept out of his way, and though, after taking Kate home, Jack had looked again for him, he had not encountered him.

Though wild with rage, caution had told Buck Rogers that it was wise at that time to keep out of Jack's way.

To do that more effectively, he had hurried to the rooms of Delancy Shelton, in the Cranford Hotel.

There he met both Reel and Delancy, and swallowed some more whisky.

Reel was observant.

"I believe you've been in a fight!" he said.

"Well, I did have a little trouble with a fellow down by the boathouse. He gave me that rake on the cheek."

"Who was it?"

"Jack Lightfoot."

It was enough to make both Reel and Delancy "sit up and pay attention."

"You got into a row with him? What about?"

"Well, I guess he thinks he owns the shore down there. I was trying to look into one of the boathouses and he came along and gave me that clip."

"Just for that?"

"Well, we had a few words before he struck me."

"He's a bad one to tackle, don't you know," said Delancy, twisting his thin cane about his thin legs.

"But I'll settle with him," fumed Rogers.

"Better let him alone," Reel advised.

"That's right. Aw—better let him alone, unless you want to get pounded up worse than that."

"Why, are all you fellows afraid of him?"

"No, I'm not afraid of him."

"We're not afraid of him, don't y' know, but at the time time—aw—you know—it doesn't pay a fellah to get into trouble with him. He's a regular trained fighter, don't you know, and——"

"Well, I ain't afraid of him! If I wasn't going out of town to-night I'd settle this business with him to his satisfaction."

"Going away to-night?" asked Reel, and he looked at Buck as if he understood the reason.

"Well, it will be a good idea to go away, y' know, until awfter the thing blows over, y' know," Delancy advised. "He's got a devil of a temper, I'm told."

"Are you fellows a set of cowards?"

Reel's face flushed.

"I guess you don't like the idea of staying and meeting him again yourself," he answered, rather warmly.

Buck looked at his watch.

"When's the next train for Cardiff?"

"Eleven."

It was then no more than seven.

"Gee! Have I got to wait that long?"

"You seem to be in a hurry!" Reel sneered, for his pride had been offended.

"I think I'll go down and see if there isn't an earlier train. I've got an important engagement at Cardiff and have got to get there as quick as I can."

Buck's encounter with Jack seemed to have cleared his brain. He saw his act now in something like its true light, and was inwardly cursing himself for a fool. But the young rascal was so much impressed by his own personal good looks, and had so underrated Kate Strawn that he had thought at first that she might not object to his actions down there by the boathouse. Now he foresaw trouble, not only with Jack, but with Kate's brother, Brodie, if he tarried longer in Cranford.

Hence, making an excuse of going to see if there was not an earlier train—both Reel and Delancy knew it was but an excuse—he hastily quitted the room and the hotel.

But Buck Rogers was not to get off so easily.

He observed some young fellows staring hard at him as he hastened down to the station.

There was no earlier train, not even a freight train.

When he turned back the young fellows were still staring.

He observed, however, that there were not so many of them. A few had departed.

"They've gone to tell Lightfoot they've spotted me," was his thought.

It alarmed him.

He turned back into the station. His "things"—his gasoline torch and the boxes of stuff he sold on the street—were at the station, ready for shipment.

"Send those things to me at Cardiff by the next train," he ordered, speaking to the express agent.

Then he asked for a sheet of paper and an envelope, and wrote a note to the proprietor of the hotel, inclosing money to pay his bill, and requesting that his grip should be shipped to him at Cardiff.

He feared to go again to the hotel.

"I'll lie round out in the dark until a train comes, and then get on it quietly."

Fearing to remain in or near the station, for he thought Jack and Brodie and others would seek him there, he set out along the railroad toward the edge of the town.

It was growing dark, for night comes early at this time of year. But for the moon, now up, the darkness would have been heavier.

He felt a sense of relief when he did not see the knot of young fellows who had seemed to be watching him.

He walked rapidly, to get away from what he considered the dangerous vicinity.

He felt more secure as he left the station behind, and, therefore, was given a most unpleasant shock of surprise when, two or three street crossings above, he came upon the same group of young fellows he had seen

They had observed the direction of his flight, and by circling round had got ahead of him.

Their leader was Brodie Strawn. Another was Phil Kirtland. Wilson Crane was in the crowd and so was Connie Lynch. All were academy boys, though Buck Rogers did not know that. In the darkness he did not know that Jack Lightfoot was not there. He had feared Jack most of all, and naturally supposed that Jack was leading this crowd. As soon as he saw them he knew he was in for trouble.

He turned about abruptly, as if he had not observed them.

"Hold on there!" Brodie called.

Buck Rogers started to run.

Wilson Crane left the crowd like a streak, and overtook him before he had gone twenty yards.

"We want to speak with you," said Wilson, reaching out a hand.

Rogers turned like a flash, and, with a straight punch, landed on Wilson's long nose.

Wilson leaped at him like a wild cat, landing a counter blow.

The flight of Buck Rogers was stopped, for the next minute the whole crowd surrounded him.

"What's the meaning of this outrage?" he demanded. "Let me go!"

"We'll let you go when we're through with you," was Brodie's ominous answer.

"You'll let me go now!"

"We'll break your neck, if you try to run!"

"What are you going to do with me?" Buck asked, shivering with fear, when so many hands clutched him.

"We're going to settle with you."

"What for? I haven't done anything. Let me go, please."

"You know what for!" cried Brodie. "You grossly insulted my sister down by the lake. We're going to settle with you for that—see."

"We're going to teach such skunks as you that come

here from other places that Cranford girls can't be insulted in that manner," grunted another.

He produced a rope as he said it.

Buck's knees shook with fright. Visions of a lynching were before his eyes.

"Let up, fellows!" he begged. "If this is a joke, it's gone far enough."

"If it's a joke," sneered Brodie.

"I—I didn't—didn't mean anything! I—I—was just—just fooling!"

"Call this fooling, then," said Brodie. "Put up your hands."

"You're going—going to——"

"Tie you. Put out your hands!"

Buck was so convinced that a lynching was to follow that he began to struggle furiously; but a dozen hands had hold of him, and he was thrown helplessly down on the railroad track.

"Tie him!" Brodie panted.

"Let up, fellows!" Buck begged, in terror. "If you'll let up, I'll leave town. I promise to leave town."

"You'll leave town, all right," said Wilson, grimly, as he felt of his nose, on which Buck had landed rather heavily.

"You'll leave town, in a way you don't want to," said another.

They were tying his hands.

Some of the boys disappeared. When they returned, they bore a rail, which they had purloined from a fence.

"We ought to have some tar and feathers," said Wilson, again feeling of his long nose, from which blood came at intervals. "That would serve him just right."

"Please let me go," Buck began to beg. "Please—please let me go! I'll leave town, and never come back."

"If you ever come back we'll hang you!" Brodie threatened, in his heavy voice.

"And if he even speaks to a Cranford girl again we'll burn him alive," said another, willing to give Buck a good scare, now that they were at it.

"Bring forward the horse," Brodie ordered.

The rail was brought up.

"We're going to ride you out of town on a rail, and if you ever show yourself here again you may consider this just a taste of what you'll get then."

"I'll—I'll never come back again. Please——"

"If you do we'll hang you sure!" said Wilson.

"Put him on the rail!" Brodie ordered.

"Please don't! I'll—I'll have you arrested, if you do!"

"You won't dare to. The men of the town would take you in hand then. On with him."

A cry of pain and fear came from Buck Rogers as he was lifted bodily and set with a heavy jolt astride of the sharp rail.

He tried to throw himself off, but a threat that worse would be done for him—that they would get tar and feathers for him—made his efforts weak.

Then his feet were tied together.

Then the boys, grouping at each end of the rail, with some in the middle to steady Rogers and see that he did not throw himself off, moved off along the railroad with him, bearing him out of town.

The rail cut cruelly, and again he begged, and even wept, but the boys were obdurate.

"This is what you get for insulting a lady," said Wilson.

"It's what you get for abusing the confidence of a friend," remarked Phil Kirtland.

"And if you come here again we'll have a high old hanging bee!" shouted another.

Behind them lay the lights of the town. Before them was darkness, dimly lit by the moon, and those two lines of steel rails stretching out into the night.

When they were well beyond the town with him they untied his hands and dropped the rail.

He fell with it, his bonds parted and the fellow scrambled to his feet. He felt almost as if the sharp rail had cut him in two.

In addition, the manner of his exit from Cranford had been more humiliating to him than words can express.

As Buck scrambled up Brodie lifted him heavily on the toe of his shoe.

It was a sharp toe, and Brodie was a good, strong kicker.

Buck shot forward as if hurled from a gun, and fell to his knees.

Brodie kicked him again as he rose, and then kicked him again as he started to run.

"Git, you miserable cur, and if you ever come here again we'll serve you worse!"

Buck Rogers was headed in the direction of Cardiff.

He started at a lively clip, fearing the toe of that shoe, and when the darkness screened him he was still running.

CHAPTER V.

IN CARDIFF.

The next day Jack and Tom Lightfoot, Lafe and Jubal, and Ned and Nat were in Cardiff, having gone

there for the purpose of conferring with members of the Cardiff eleven about a football game.

They knew what the academy boys had done the evening before, for it had become the talk of the town.

Ray Gilbert, who had been captain of the Cardiff nine, was now captain of the eleven which the Cranford eleven expected soon to meet.

He was a pleasant fellow, with gray eyes and light complexion, a good athlete and football player, and Jack had rather liked him when the nines crossed bats in the summer.

It was at Gilbert's invitation that Jack and his friends were now in Cardiff, and, when they met, Gilbert asked them to go to his home for the proposed conference.

Other members of the Cardiff eleven were there when they reached the place.

Gilbert seemed to be something of a swell, to judge by the manner in which he had his room fitted up.

It was a large room, in the pleasantest part of the house, and, in addition to its furnishing, which was rather elaborate and costly, there were a number of fine shotguns and rifles, together with some old-fashioned weapons which Gilbert had picked up in various ways and kept as curiosities.

The guns were arranged on the walls effectively, and Jack looked at them with much interest, particularly examining those of ancient make.

"Do you shoot, Lightfoot?" was Gilbert's question, when he saw Jack looking at the weapons.

"Sometimes, a little."

Gilbert laughed.

"That means 'a good deal.' When I hear a fellow say he shoots a little, I know that he shoots whenever he can get a chance. And, by the way, we're going to have a shoot this afternoon, out at the grounds of the gun club. You fellows will have to go out. Perhaps you'd like to show us what Cranford can do. We know you can play ball pretty well."

"We had a gun club last year."

"And you've given it up?"

"Well, you see, we had so much baseball and other things on hand during the summer that we hadn't much time for the gun club. But we didn't exactly give it up."

"We had a little shoot, just among ourselves, whenever we found time," Tom added.

Gilbert and some of the other Cardiff fellows in the room looked interested. All were members of the Cardiff gun club, and fancied they knew something about shooting.

They were Leslie Lee, Cave Clifford, Bradford Camp and Tom Spencer.

"You'll have to take a try with us this afternoon," said Camp, speaking generally to the Cranford fellows.

"We'd be glad to," Jack answered, quite frankly, pleased by the invitation.

"But we couldn't expect to shine with you, after the constant practice you've had," said Tom Lightfoot, who was naturally modest, and never cared to boast of what he could do.

"Oh, I don't know about that!" cried Ned Skeen, who was just the opposite of Tom in this, for Ned was sometimes guilty of a good deal of bragging. "You know the scores we fellows made week before last!"

"What were they?" asked Camp, thinking to guess at their shooting abilities by the answer.

"Well, I made a straight ten, out of a possible ten! Could anybody do better than that?"

"And you never did it before in your life," cut in Nat Kimball. "And you'll never do it again, if you live a hundred years."

"How do you know I won't?" snapped Skeen, irritated.

"Because it was just an accident."

"Bah! Go cool off! Accident! Could I accidentally hit ten clay pigeons straight, in that way?"

"Well, you did!"

"Aw, you just say that because you couldn't do it! You never made over seven straight in your life, and you never will. You're bow-legged in your eyes and see crooked, and that's why you can't shoot any better."

Ned, having crushed Nat, as he felt, turned boastingly to the Cardiff crowd.

"And, howling mackerels, fellows, I'd be willing to bet you money that we can hustle you hard, for all of your practice! I haven't touched a gun for two weeks, but——"

"Come down to the grounds this afternoon, you wonder, and we'll see what you can do," said Lee.

"We'll have plenty of guns there," added Camp, "and it will be a great shoot. Yes, you fellows have got to go down. But if Ned Skeen's going to make ten straight right along, we'll not be in it."

"Oh, of course I couldn't do that every time," Ned admitted, preparing a soft spot to fall on in case he failed, which he knew he was likely to do.

"But you can show us what you can do."

Lee took up one of the guns, and, pitching it to his shoulder, pointed it at one of the pictures on the wall.

"Holy horrors!" said Gilbert. "Don't shoot! That's my grandfather."

Lee grinned.

"Oh, I shouldn't want to kill the old gentleman."

Jack looked at his watch.

"What time is this shoot to be?"

"Two o'clock. We gather at two, and the shooting begins as soon as enough members are there to make it interesting; or it can begin any time, if those there want to shoot. You'll have plenty of time to get home afterward."

Jack Lightfoot dearly loved a gun. To him a handsome gun was a beautiful object. He liked to feel the grip of it in his hands and the weight of it on his shoulder; he delighted in the crack of the explosions, the quick spout of smoke from the muzzle and the drop of the cleanly hit clay pigeon.

To attend that afternoon shoot of the Cardiff gun club would be a pleasure to him, and he said so, and laid his plans accordingly.

At home he had a handsome gun, a birthday present from his uncle, Tom's father, and in all Cranford there was not a better shot with either shotgun, rifle or revolver.

No doubt that was partly because his eye was so clear and keen, and his nerves so strong and steady; for a true eye and a steady nerve are requisites in shooting.

Ned Skeen's nervousness made him an unreliable shot. One could never tell what Ned would do in a shooting contest. He might make ten straight kills or miss everything that flew from the traps. It all depended on his condition. If nothing happened to excite him, he might make a good score; if something came along to "rattle" him, Ned could do nothing with a gun.

Ned was, however, like a good many other fellows, always telling of the best he had done, never of the worst.

Unless a man can do that "best" all the time, to speak of it as if it were the regular thing is deception. Yet Ned did not mean to deceive.

All of the Cranford fellows declared that they would be glad to go down to the gun club grounds, and perhaps take part in the shoot.

Then the business for which the members of the two elevens had come together was taken up, and gun talk was dropped for talk of the gridiron.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE GROUNDS OF THE CARDIFF GUN CLUB.

When Jack Lightfoot and his friends arrived at the grounds of the Cardiff gun club they found an open space, with traps and everything in order, and boys to spring them and pick up unkilld "birds," together with a number of young men and boys in sweaters and in overcoats, for the afternoon was cool.

Gilbert had come down with the Cranford boys, and now introduced them to the earlier arrivals.

Jack stopped and stared, as Gilbert began one introduction:

"Mr. Lightfoot, allow me to make you acquainted with Buck Rogers; Buck, this is Jack Lightfoot, captain of the Cranford eleven. They want to see us shoot, and will probably do some shooting themselves, just to prove that Cranford is good for any old thing."

He was laughing in a pleasant way, and did not notice the manner in which Jack stiffened up when he was thus unexpectedly brought face to face with Buck Rogers, nor Buck's sudden and uneasy flush.

Gilbert went right on introducing other fellows, and Jack passed with him here and there, to make the acquaintance of the Cardiff boys, and so left Buck Rogers behind.

But he did not forget that hot flush nor the look Buck had given him; nor could he fail to remember what had happened in Cranford and Buck's manner of exit from the town.

On Buck's cheek was a slight abrasion of the skin, covered, as Jack observed, by court plaster. That abrasion had been made by Jack's fist when he knocked Buck up against the boathouse.

Jack did not at once look again at Buck, for he did not want to make a scene, or do anything to stir up a quarrel there.

However, he had to turn back after a time with Gilbert.

As he did so he saw that Buck had drawn toward the edge of the crowd.

A lot of mischievous boys had gathered there, and with them was a big goat that looked as lean as if he had had nothing but old tin cans to eat for a month past.

The goat thrust its nose into a small basket containing loaded shells, and seemed about to try to eat one of them, when, with a kick, Buck Rogers sent it scampering away.

The small boys laughed.

Jack, separating from Ray Gilbert and joining Lafe

Lampton, walked past the boys and Buck, and then turned to face toward the shooting grounds.

Suddenly Lafe laughed and pinched Jack's arm.

The goat seemed to be warlike, and was watching Buck Rogers.

As it passed him again he kicked at it again, and it scampered, but wheeled when it was by him.

The toe of his shoe had struck its stubby tail, as could be told by the painful manner in which it flicked that member.

It was not much of a tail, but pain in it was probably as great as if the tail had been a yard long.

But that was not what had drawn Lafe's attention and made him pinch Jack's arm.

It was the action of one of the small boys, who was now bending over the goat, which again faced toward Buck Rogers as if it longed for a test of metal with him.

The small boy had in his hands a clothespin.

With a quick motion he snapped it on the goat's short tail.

The next movement in this little drama came with lightning-like swiftness. Remembering the kick which had struck that same tail, by some peculiar mental process the goat perhaps thought the pinching thing which now gripped had been affixed there by the youth who had kicked its tail.

From thought to action was instantaneous.

An angry bleat sounded.

Biff!

The lowered head and horns of the goat struck Buck Rogers just where the toe of Brodie Strawn's boot had struck the previous evening.

And Buck shot forward, as on that other occasion, landing on his hands and knees.

Then——

Baa-a! Biff—whack!

The butting machine was at work again, and again had taken a fall out of Buck Rogers.

The boys were yelling. Buck limped painfully, as Ray Gilbert and some other members of the gun club came to his rescue and attempted to drive away the goat.

Drive a goat, with its tail held as in a vise by a pinching clothespin?

At least, it was not possible to drive *that* goat. It butted Gilbert over on his back, and then ran amuck, flicking its tail, baa-a-ing and snorting, and ramming at everything that stood in its way.

It seemed mean to laugh, but Jack Lightfoot laughed until the tears stood in his eyes, and would have been laughing much longer if the goat had not come toward him, skipping and butting, thus forcing him to run for safety.

The wild cavorting of the goat continued for full two minutes, and until some of the Cardiff boys had put shells in their guns and declared they would shoot it; then the clothespin fortunately came away, and the goat, with a last loud baa-a-a-a! fled from the scene of its lively capering.

Jack was still laughing, and so were most of the other fellows on the gun club grounds.

Not so Buck Rogers.

He fancied that Jack had clipped that clothespin on the goat's tail and set the goat on him, for the purpose of paining and humiliating him, and he was sure of it when he saw Jack's face, which was red with laughter.

On being knocked down by the goat, a bunch of letters and papers had fallen out of Buck's pocket.

Most of these had been picked up and returned to him.

But one, trodden into the soil, had been overlooked, and was detected by Jack's keen eyes.

He was not sure at first that it had come from Buck's pocket, but believed so, and then was certain of it when he examined his "find."

It was a small printed proclamation of a reward offered for the arrest of a certain thief called Joe Teneriffe, and gave his picture and description.

At a glance—for he now looked sharply at Buck—Jack was almost certain that Rogers was himself the "Joe Teneriffe" wanted by that sheriff.

The clothing shown in the picture was not the same as that now worn by Buck, and there were some other differences, but the resemblance in features was there.

"If he isn't himself Joe Teneriffe, then he ought to sue Teneriffe for slander for looking so much like him," was Jack's thought.

He showed the picture to Tom and Lafe and Nat, who were with him at the moment, and called their attention to what seemed his discovery.

"Jiminy crickets, if that isn't him it looks like him!" Lafe declared.

"Sure thing!" said Tom, glancing at the picture and then looking at Buck Rogers.

"And if it's him," said Nat Kimball, "he's wanted."

Buck was brushing some of the dirt from his clothing, and talking with some members of the gun club, at the same time trying to laugh and make light of what had happened.

A little later he separated from the fellows who had been talking with him.

"I'll try him, now that he's alone," said Jack. "This is his, anyhow, and it should be returned to him."

Forthwith, he approached him and held out the printed circular.

"This is yours, I believe."

Buck's eyes flashed as they stared into Jack's.

Then the red blood ran hot in his face, when he saw what Jack was holding out for him.

"I think you dropped it out of your pocket when those other things dropped out," said Jack.

"No!" Buck shook his head, positively. "I never saw it before. Some one else must have lost it."

The red flush fled from his face as soon as it had come, leaving it ghastly.

Then he took a second thought. He wanted to get that proclamation out of Jack's hands.

"Oh, let me see it again!"

Jack gave it to him, at the same time watching him.

"Why, I'll take this, if you don't mind; I've a police friend who'd like to see it. If he should find this man it'd be money in his jeans, see! If you don't mind?"

"Take it," said Jack. "*I was sure it came from your pocket!*"

He turned on his heel and walked away, rejoining his friends a moment later.

"What did he say?" inquired Lafe.

"Denied that it was his; and then the next minute became anxious, and told a lie about a policeman, a friend of his, he said, who would like to have it."

"And you let him have it? Jiminy crickets, I wouldn't have done that!"

"I wanted to see what he'd do. And it was his, sure. I feel almost certain that he's Joe Teneriffe."

"He's leaving the grounds," said Tom.

"And now, if he's the fellow, he'll have a chance to make a run for it," said Lafe, regretfully.

"If he's the fellow, he'll make a run for it, and that will prove the case against him," Jack answered. "We'll have a chance to see what comes of it."

CHAPTER VII.

OPENING THE SHOOT.

Jack was mistaken in this.

Though Buck Rogers left the grounds of the gun club and was gone some little time, he returned, before the opening of the shoot.

Ever since his ignominious expulsion from Cranford, and even before, as the reader knows, Buck had been "steaming up" a little.

He had "taken a drink" several times with Delancy and Reel, for the sake of good fellowship. But for the effect of those drinks he might not have insulted Kate Strawn.

After being ridden on a rail and kicked out of town, he had contrived to get aboard a freight train, which stopped at a siding, and thus had made his way back to Cardiff, where he took a few more drinks, between that time and the hour of the gun club meeting, for the purpose of taking the sting out of that humiliating experience.

Yet Jack had not known that Buck was drinking when he first met him on the gun club grounds.

But the effects on Buck were much the same as if he had outwardly shown his state of partial intoxication. They warped his judgment and increased his inner bitterness and hatred against Jack and his friends. They also made him reckless of consequences.

Buck fully believed that Jack Lightfoot was the leader of the crowd of young fellows who, in Cranford, had ridden him on a rail. He believed that Jack had snapped the clothespin on the tail of the goat and set that animal on him. And he believed, also, that Jack now knew him to be the Joe Teneriffe whose arrest was desired by the sheriff.

Buck Rogers was Joe Teneriffe. He had gone by that name in a distant section of the State, just as at Cranford he had called himself "Johnny Lightfingers."

While calling himself Joe Teneriffe he had been guilty of several crimes, one of which was burglary, and the latter having been traced to him, he had jumped the country, escaping almost under the very nose of the sheriff, for he was clever.

One of the advertisements sent out by the sheriff had fallen under his observation, having reached as far as Cardiff, and he had confiscated it, not wishing it to be seen by others.

Then he had done the very foolish thing of putting it in his pocket and carrying it about with him.

If Buck had possessed his ordinary discretion now he would not have returned to the gun club grounds, but the whisky made him defiant and revengeful.

He came back to "get even" with Jack Lightfoot.

With him he brought a handsome gun and a box of cartridges for the same.

His face was noticeably flushed when he thus returned, but otherwise no one would have guessed that he was in an intoxicated and reckless mood.

Jack, as soon as he saw him this second time, was sure Buck had taken a drink while gone; but even Jack did not know how intoxicated he was, and did not dream of the murderous plan which had formed in Buck's heated brain and which he was there now to carry out if he could.

Coming into the crowd of shooters, with his gun under his arm, Buck began to talk rather loudly and freely.

"Oh, these Cranford guys ain't such-a-much!" Jack overheard him say. "They think they are, but that's because their heads are too big for their hats."

Ray Gilbert caught him by the arm and took him to one side, and there talked with him.

Jack did not hear the talk, but he could guess what it was about, for when Buck came back with Gilbert he was quieter.

Having taken his gun from its case, Ray Gilbert put it together and opened a box of loaded shells, which he placed on the ground. The gun was a handsome twelve-gauge hammerless, built for trap shooting.

"Use it when you like, and the shells, too," said Gilbert, courteously, speaking to Jack.

A gunner had stepped into position.

Two of the three traps out in front, in the open space, were sprung simultaneously, and the clay birds rose into the air with quick motion.

The gunner's weapon went to his shoulder with rapidity.

Bang! Bang!

One of the clay birds flew to pieces under the impact of the charge of number ten shot, but the other sailed on untouched.

A bright light came into Jack Lightfoot's blue-gray eyes. The report of the gun and the fall of the birds set his pulses to jumping and flushed his rather fair face.

"Oh, this is great!" he declared, speaking to Gilbert. "Thank you for the use of the gun. But I don't like to use your shells. There are plenty for sale on the grounds."

"Use 'em, and welcome," Gilbert urged, for he, as captain of the Cardiff eleven, felt that Jack and his friends were his especial guests that day.

Jack took up the gun and examined it, springing it open, and then shutting it with a click; looked at the name of the maker and through the shining barrels, and threw it to his shoulder to "sight" at a bird which was just then shot from one of the traps.

Bang!

It was not Jack who fired, though he had covered the bird, but the fellow in position for that bird, and the bird was merely clay dust, as the shot struck it.

"Oh, this is great!" Jack exclaimed again.

"Step up and try your hand," said Gilbert. "The regular shooting for scores isn't on yet."

"I'll wait," Jack observed, cautiously. Then added: "So I can see what you fellows do."

"And then come in and beat us!"

"Perhaps after I see your shooting I'll think it policy not to shoot to-day."

He was in a delighted humor, and for the moment had forgotten Buck Rogers.

But Buck came up to where he and Gilbert and others were standing and inspected the gun which Jack now put down. He did not speak to Jack, nor look at him.

"Going into it, eh?" said Gilbert, merrily, seeing

Buck's gun. "It's a fine day for it. Not much wind, you see, and the sun is just right. We ought to see some good work done here this afternoon. We're hoping to hold our own with the crack shots from Cranford."

His manner was light and chaffing.

Buck did not answer, but continued to look the gun over, and then, snapping it open, glanced down the barrels, as Jack had done.

"A fine gun!" he said, carelessly, though he had inspected it many times.

"Pretty good," said Gilbert. "It cost enough to be good."

Guns were cracking and clay birds were falling in fragments.

"Now for the regular score shooting!" cried Gilbert, a little later. "Those fellows have had practice enough."

Ned Skeen had got hold of a gun—one belonging to a Cardiff shooter—and Jack now saw him step into position.

Ned was nervous, but he affected an air of ease and jollity.

"If you want to see shooting," he said, nervously, "get onto this. If those traps would only throw out a dozen or two birds at once I'd get every one of them."

He was joking, of course, and wanted the Cardiff boys to see that he was joking.

"Ready?" asked the boy who manipulated the traps.

"Pull!" said Ned, throwing the gun to his shoulder.

Two birds sprang up with a rush, rising at the same time. Ned poked his gun at one of them, which was going across into the right field with the motion of an express train. It passed so quickly that Ned did not shoot at all.

Some of the Cardiff fellows grinned as Ned lowered his gun.

"Howling mackerels!" he cried. "This gun's got an awful pull on the trigger."

Nat Kimball snickered.

"Ain't two birds at a time enough, or do you have to have a whole flock?"

"Shut up!" Ned snapped. "I'm doing this shooting!"

"Oh, are you? I didn't hear it."

Ned wanted to go back and lift Nat with the toe of his boot.

One of the birds had broken in its fall, but the other, uninjured, had been picked up by running boys.

"I'll try it again!" said Ned.

"Against our rules," said Gilbert, smiling. "You had your chance, and will have to wait now until your turn comes again, unless you want to shoot just as a privileged visitor, without taking part in the contest."

Nat snickered again, and Ned retired, with a face like a beet.

"What if Susie had been here?" Nat whispered in his ear, with fiendish glee.

"Oh, shut up, you black-faced monkey!" he laughed nervously. "If you don't, I'll poke this gun down your throat and pull the trigger."

"But the trigger's too hard for you—too hard for you!" cried Nat, backing away, for Ned looked as if he meant to lunge at him.

"Two shots charged against you, and both misses—they count the same as misses. Oh, where are those ten kills straight?"

Ned kicked at him, and Nat fled, laughing.

Jack smiled when he observed this bit of byplay; but his ears were for the rattle and click of guns, the snapping of locks, and the chatter about different makes of guns, the qualities of various brands of loaded shells and things of that sort. Being a gun lover, such talk always interested him. Again he was forgetting Buck Rogers.

A Cardiff gunner stepped into position, and the two reports of his gun rang out; he had made a kill and a miss.

"There goes Lafe," said Jack, speaking to Tom, who was by his side.

Lafe carried a heavy gun, and by the rules was required to shoot from a slightly longer distance, as his gun was a ten-gauge and used larger charges of powder and shot.

"Stand on your toes and stick your fingers in your ears," Tom advised, laughing. "Lafe's got a cannon."

"Look out for another explosion of dynamite at

Portsmouth, or Hell Gate!" cried Wilson Crane, in a voice which Lafe could hear.

Lafe turned about, winked one of his sky-blue eyes at Wilson and bit into a peanut.

When he cast the peanut shell aside he faced the traps and called to the boy to "Pull!" and the same time pitching up his gun.

Two clay birds rose into the air.

The first bird was blow into dust, as the spout of smoke flew from the big gun.

The next sailed off, going swiftly.

Ned began to laugh.

Bang!

The second bird splintered and fell to the ground.

Lafe had been slow with his second barrel, making the kill at sixty yards or more, but he had brought down the two birds.

Ray Gilbert clapped his hands in applause.

"Oh, these Cranford lobsters aren't so slow!" he said, joking, speaking to Jack.

Jack laughed and waved his hand; Lafe was his good friend, and he had all faith in him.

"You'll find that Lafayette is good at about any old thing. He's slow sometimes, as you saw just now, but in spite of it he generally gets there."

A Cardiff man now made two kills, breaking the birds cleanly.

"Wilson Crane!" shouted the man who had the list of names.

It had an old, familiar sound, that call—like the umpire's call of the batting list in a ball game.

Wilson took up a gun furnished him by Leslie Lee, which Lee had already loaded, and stalked like a giraffe into position, thrusting his sharp nose forward and craning his long neck as he faced the traps.

"Pull!" he said, quickly.

The boy sprung the traps at the word, and the birds shot out, one going dead ahead and the other off toward the right.

Wilson took a snap shot at the bird crossing the line of his vision and shattered it, and then pulled on the one that was flying so swiftly from him.

The muzzle of his gun wavered for an instant, then settled, and he pulled the trigger.

Bang!

Nat leaped into the air, swinging his hat, for it was a clean kill, at a distance of about fifty yards.

"Hurrah for our side!" he shouted. "We'd ought to have brought the mascot."

"Gol-darn if I want that poll parrot raound here!" declared Jubal, laughing. "Some squint-eyed shooter might take her fer a clay pigeon and bu'st her wide open."

"Buck Rogers!" called the man with the list of names.

"I'll take your gun this time, as I want to try it," said Buck, speaking to Ray Gilbert, and picking up Ray's hammerless.

He stepped steadily into position, in spite of the "load" he carried; and when the birds sprang from the trap he killed both.

They were about the cleanest kills made so far, and brought a round of applause.

"Jack Lightfoot!"

Jack flushed. It was somewhat disquieting for him to follow Buck Rogers. For the time, he had almost forgotten Rogers, who had stood quietly in the crowd behind him.

With a swing, Rogers passed Gilbert's gun to him, and Jack, picking two shells out of the open box on the ground, snapped the gun open and thrust them into the breach, moving at the same time into place.

"Pull!" said some one, laughing.

The traps clicked and the birds rose into the air.

Jack was taken by surprise, for he had not commanded the boy to "pull," hence he was not ready.

Yet the gun flew to his cheek.

Bang!

Bang!

The birds were blown into dust.

"Good!" said Gilbert, enthusiastically. "It seems to me I heard you murmur that you could shoot a little. I judge you can."

Jack smiled.

It was a pleasure to make those clean kills in that way, after the surprise of the sudden and unexpected flight of the birds.

CHAPTER VIII.

TREACHERY.

The shooting was becoming interesting.

Ten rounds had been fired, and the race lay between Jack Lightfoot and Buck Rogers. They were the only two who had not made a miss. Rogers had seemed as steady as iron.

Jack heard some of the Cardiff fellows talking. They had discovered Rogers' condition, and were commenting on it. The Cardiff gun club claimed to be the champion of that part of the State, and Jack learned now that Buck Rogers was considered the champion of the champions.

"Drunk or sober," he heard Leslie Lee say, "Buck can outshoot anything in this end of the State."

"Lightfoot's doing as good work," another said.

"He's had good luck so far, that's all; the birds have gone just right for him. But wait till they go to throwing three birds at once. Then you'll see where he is."

Jack was not supposed to hear this, but his ears were keen. He flushed slightly, and said something to Ray Gilbert, to keep up his air of not having heard.

When eleven shots had been fired at birds hurled from the traps two at a time, the traps were changed to alter the angle of the birds' flight, and at the same time a third trap was brought into use, so that three birds would be thrown at once, each at a different angle and in a different direction.

"Oh, you're sure to get one of 'em now!" said Nat, speaking to Ned Skeen, who was, first on the list. "With a whole flock going up at once, you can surely get one."

Yet Nat knew, from sad experience, that to kill three birds, or even two out of the three, thrown at once in that way, was not a thing easy to do. If the gunner tried to kill but one of them—well, that would be different. But he could never hope to shine in a clever gun club by trying for but one bird out of three thus released.

Ned was resolved to fire his gun, at any rate, and he did, and, to Nat's surprise, brought down two of the three birds.

"See if you can do as well, you little snipe!" he shot at Nat. "I'm betting you can't."

Nat did as well, even better, when his turn came; for, although he secured but two birds, both were cleaner "kills" than Ned Skeen's.

Wilson, Jubal and Tom Lightfoot each brought down two birds, but Lafe, in spite of the handicap of his heavy gun, got the three straight.

Buck Rogers once more stepped into position.

He was smoking a cigarette with apparent carelessness, and did not take it from his lips when he shot. He was again using Ray Gilbert's hammerless.

With an ease which showed the practiced gunner, and also showed that his nerves were unaffected, he killed his three birds.

Buck Rogers seemed to be one of those fellows who have steadier nerves when they have been drinking than when they are fully sober. When sober, his nerves were shaky, due to the lack of a stimulant; when drinking, the stimulant had been supplied, and he could shoot better.

"Now, Lightfoot!"

It was Ray Gilbert's voice, and at the same time the caller shouted Jack's name.

"Gee!" said Buck Rogers, looking at the gun in his hand, and then passing it to Jack, "I thought this was my own gun I shot, but it's Gilbert's. They're both hammerless and look so much alike!"

Jack broke it open, put in a couple of shells and stepped into place.

This time he was given an opportunity to do his own ordering.

"Pull!" he said, in his steady voice, and the gun rose to his cheek.

Bang! Bang!

Two birds shivered into powder.

Jack had an extra shell in his hand.

With a quick motion he broke the gun open again. The third bird was sailing along into left field, flying close to the ground. It promised to be a difficult shot.

The motion of breaking the gun and thrusting in the shell was made like a flash, and the gun leaped again to Jack's cheek.

The clay bird was very close to the ground now, and descending, and fifty yards away.

Bang!

It was so clean a kill that the bird seemed to disappear in a puff of smoke.

Again Gilbert clapped his hands.

"Old boy, I think I heard you remark, modestly, that you shoot just a little!"

Three times Buck Rogers and Jack Lightfoot repeated this performance, being the only shooters who finished the string of twenty birds—the last nine being three triples—without a miss.

"A tie!" was shouted, as Jack made his last kills.

He and Buck were tied. The rest of the shooters were nowhere.

Buck gave Jack a sarcastic grin.

"I suppose we'll have to shoot that off, Lightfoot!"

"Sure! If you want to try it."

"I do."

"All right."

"Try three birds at unknown angles," Jack suggested.

When Buck agreed to this, the traps were changed, so that the angles at which the birds were to be hurled and the directions were unknown to the gunners.

Buck's face flushed a bit redder. It was already quite red.

"Pull!" he shouted, when he was ready.

Two birds dropped at the first two shots; but the third, flying at a sharp angle toward Buck's right shoulder, he missed clean.

The red in his face deepened, and a glitter came into his eyes.

Jack picked up the gun that lay on the box at Gilbert's side, and which Robert Gilbert had unloaded. Both supposed that it was Gilbert's gun. Most of the time Buck had been using a gun loaned him by a friend.

This time no one had seen the clever exchange made by Johnny Lightfingers, by which he had substituted his own weapon for Gilbert's just before stepping into position to shoot.

Jack took the gun from Gilbert and snapped it open to look at the cartridges. He saw the shining brass butts in position. The third shell he held ready in his

hand. If he had taken the shells out and looked into the barrels he would have seen that not a speck of gunpowder stained them—they had not been used that day.

Buck Rogers' red face paled now, and he retreated toward the rear, making the excuse of asking an acquaintance for a match for his cigarette, and then walking toward him to get it, thus taking himself well back from the spot where Jack Lightfoot stood.

Scarcely was Jack in position, when the traps were sprung again without his order to pull.

His heart jumped, for he believed this was a trick of the boy who manipulated them, and who perhaps did not want him to defeat a member of the Cardiff gun club.

Nevertheless, Jack threw the gun to his cheek. Even if he failed to bring down the birds, he would not let it be claimed that he had signaled and then had refused to shoot, and that claim might be made against him he knew.

As Jack drew down on the bird going to the right and pressed the trigger, there was a terrific explosion and Jack was fairly thrown to the ground. For an instant he felt that his left arm had been blown off.

Gilbert and others sprang toward him, and Jack rose, white-faced, his left hand and arm hanging limp at his side.

"Hurt?" Gilbert asked, solicitously.

"I—I think so!" Jack faltered.

Tom and Lafe and all the other Cranford fellows rushed up.

"What did it? Where are you hurt?" they were demanding.

Jack lifted his numbed arm. He could lift it, and saw that it was still attached to his body.

Tom grasped it and looked at it, and at the powder-stained hand.

Leslie Lee picked up the gun, which had fallen to the ground.

Buck Rogers was pressing into the crowd that began to surge about Jack.

"Split wide open!" said Lee, looking at the gun.

Gilbert turned and caught at the gun. It was, he supposed, his weapon.

The gun had been ripped open from the muzzle almost to the breech, a section of the right barrel having been torn out; and it was this that had numbed Jack's hand and arm, for his left hand had clasped the gun barrel at the moment of the explosion. It was only good fortune that had kept him from being mangled horribly.

Ray Gilbert looked in amazement at the gun—the gun which he supposed to be his.

Then an exclamation arose from him.

"Heavens, this isn't my gun!"

"No?" was cried.

"Why, no—this is—is—Buck Rogers' gun! Why, how——"

He turned round, and found Rogers close by him. In spite of the liquor, Rogers' face was white.

"Why, my gun!" he cried. "How'd he happen to have my gun?"

"I don't know, but it's your gun! And see there!"

Jack looked now, with the others, and he saw a rust crack in the broken barrel. Along that crack the explosion had torn its way, and it accounted for the "accident."

But it was not an accident. Buck Rogers, at least, knew that. He had brought the gun there, knowing of that defect, and knowing, being an experienced gunner, that if a full charge of powder and shot was fired from the barrel it would fly to pieces.

And he had done it deliberately—had so manipulated things in his clever "Johnny Lightfingers" manner, that he had exchanged the guns right under the nose of Ray Gilbert, who was supposed, naturally, to be looking out for his own weapon, and Buck had done it for revenge, hoping to get even with Jack Lightfoot for his fancied wrongs, and the danger that now seemed to threaten, and willing, even glad, to mutilate Jack forever, by blowing away his hand and arm.

It was the deed of a fiend, even if the perpetrator was half intoxicated.

"I don't understand it," said Buck Rogers, affecting anxiety. "The two guns were there close together, though, and they look so much alike that I must have taken Gilbert's gun by mistake, and Lightfoot took mine."

Gilbert was still looking at Buck's gun.

"That's an old crack, and it's a wonder it didn't burst before."

"You didn't know about that?" said Tom, looking at Buck sharply.

"Why, how could I have known about it? And would I have used it, if I'd known of it?"

Lafe came forward, his face white. It was not often that such a look was seen in the face of Lafe Lampton.

"Buck Rogers," he said, "you're a scoundrel and a cowardly sneak! I saw you look at the two guns that were lying there together, and then deliberately pick up Gilbert's gun. I didn't think anything of it at the time, for you'd used Gilbert's gun before, but now I know you did it purposely, and that you haven't used your own gun this afternoon."

Buck Rogers threw back his coat as if to jump at him, but one of his friends caught him.

Lafe's fighting blood was up and he faced Rogers defiantly.

"Oh, let him come on! I know what I'm talking about. He's got it in for Jack for several reasons; and now that he's been guilty of a trick like that I'll just proceed to show him up right here, among his friends. When he was in Cranford——"

Buck had torn himself from the grasp of his friend; and now whipped out a small revolver, and, pressing the trigger, pointed it at Lafe.

Lafe was really in serious peril, for it was plain that Rogers meant to shoot, when Jack, impulsively seizing a little twenty-two target rifle from the hands of a boy, took a quick snap shot with it that struck the revolver from Rogers' hand and disarmed the villain.

A cry of pain and surprise came from Buck Rogers, for the revolver was literally torn from his grasp by the bullet.

The whole thing had come so quickly and was so startling a performance that the members of the gun club and spectators were thrown into a panic.

"You scoundrel!" shouted Jack, moving now toward Rogers.

Rogers started to run; then stopped.

"I'll settle with you—with all of you, for this!" he yelled.

"Come back and settle now, you villain!" shouted Lafe.

"Here, here!" begged Gilbert.

"But I know what I'm talking about, and just now you saw him try to shoot me. Am I to stand that? I guess nit, not even if he is a member of this gun club. He tricked Jack into taking the wrong gun, and but for luck Jack would have been killed, maybe, or had his hand torn off."

He started again for Buck Rogers.

Just at that moment a bearded man came upon the grounds of the gun club. He was keen-eyed, and from the way the tails of his coat bulged it was apparent that he carried a big revolver in his hip pocket. He seemed to be looking for some one. Then he spied Buck Rogers.

"Here," he said, beckoning, "I want just a word with you!"

Buck stared at him; looked frightened; and then, turning about, sprinted toward a fence that was not far away.

"Halt there!" the man bellowed, starting in pursuit.

Buck's legs flew the faster. He had recognized the man as the sheriff who had advertised for him, and through whose fingers he had once escaped; and it was plain that the sheriff, having trailed him to this point, had recognized him.

"Halt!" the sheriff bawled again.

He put his hand to his hip pocket.

Bang!

The report of his revolver cut the air.

Buck Rogers fell forward, and the cry rose that he was shot; but he had only struck his toe and stumbled, and was up again and running, instantly, with the sheriff lumbering along in pursuit, and yelling for him to halt.

The gun-club grounds were a scene of confusion.

CHAPTER IX.

PROVING IT.

Sure now that Buck Rogers was "Joe Teneriffe," Jack, with his friends, joined in the pursuit begun so dramatically by the sheriff.

Everybody left the grounds, all streaming in the same direction. A number of Buck's friends were enraged against the boys from Cranford. They did not understand the situation, and did not dream, then, of the crimes of which Buck had been guilty.

The sheriff and this little impromptu posse drove Rogers toward the freight yards, where a number of cars and trains were on the sidings; and there they lost track of him.

When the pursuit had been given over, the sheriff found time to explain why he "wanted" the man he called "Joe Teneriffe;" and he showed one of his proclamations, identical in every respect with the one Jack had found and returned to Buck.

Jack and his friends now, also, took the opportunity to explain their position to Ray Gilbert and the members of the gun club.

"We don't want you to think that we abused your hospitality," he said.

That was the thing which had held Jack back, even when he suspected that Rogers was "Joe Teneriffe," and even after he was convinced by Lafe's outbreak that Rogers had juggled the guns on him with the intention of injuring or killing him. He felt under great obligations to Gilbert and the other members of the club, and the fact that Rogers was a member of the club demanded that he should be given a certain consideration which he by no means deserved.

But now Jack told Gilbert and the others all he knew about Rogers; and, as the reader is aware, it was a good deal, and none of it to Rogers' credit.

He told, too, of the sheriff's proclamation he had found and returned to Rogers.

Gilbert was astounded. That Rogers should be guilty of these things, and should insult a young lady so highly respected as Kate Strawn, was almost inexplicable to him; for, though he knew that Rogers drank and was considered "wild," he had not thought he would do any of these things. And now it was known too, from the sheriff's statements, that Rogers had been guilty even of crimes which the law punishes heavily.

Jack begged the pardon of the gun club for what had happened.

"I had to use the little rifle, to keep him from killing Lafe," he said.

"Oh, that was all right; I'd have done that myself, if I'd been quick enough, and had a gun handy, and could have done it," was Gilbert's assertion. "It was a remarkable shot. That was a dirty thing for him to do; but I accounted for it even then by the fact that he'd been drinking, and Lafe jumped at him pretty rough."

"No more so than he deserved," said Lafe. "I saw him juggle those guns, though I didn't guess what he was up to until after the gun exploded. I wanted to hammer his face in, and I was ready to do it."

Gilbert laughed nervously. He had been disturbed out of his serenity, whether it was wholly natural or assumed toward these guests.

"You fellows from Cranford are a warm bunch!"

Lafe laughed, then, and cracked open a peanut.

"We're hot enough to burn the fingers of the fellows that try to handle us roughly, anyway. I hope they'll catch that scoundrel!"

"He's a slick one," said Tom. "I saw that while he was in Cranford."

"And he could juggle those guns, without doubt, and not half try," Jack remarked, glad that the fur of the gun-club members seemed to have been rubbed the right way again. "You'd say so, if you'd seen some of his tricks at Cranford. He's as good as Reel Snodgrass at work of that kind, and that's saying he's fine at it. Reel's a wonder."

"And there's no doubt that was an old crack in his gun," Gilbert admitted. "I could see that easily. I'd like to think he didn't know about that."

"The gun was brought in?" Jack asked.

"Yes, it's here."

They were again at Gilbert's home.

He went into another room and brought back the gun, which he handed to Jack.

"Only the mangled remainders of a gun naow," remarked Jubal, eying it.

"Now, this is what I wanted to look at," said Jack, inspecting the insides of the barrels. "Lafe is sure that Buck didn't use this gun to-day. And—there!"

He pointed to the slight coating of gunpowder left on the inner surface of the burst barrel.

"That proves it!" he cried.

It was but a thin coating, such as would have been made by shooting the weapon but once; and the left barrel, which had not been discharged, was bright and shining, with no powder stains in it.

"Some of you fellows wiped your guns at intervals—you did, Gilbert—but no gun used on the grounds was given so thorough a cleaning there that the barrels would have shone like this one which was not used. I'll leave it to you if that isn't so."

Gilbert got his gun from its case, and, snapping it open, looked down into it.

"I passed the oil swab through these barrels just before Buck used the gun, and we'll see."

They were fairly black with powder stains, in spite of that use of the swab.

"Compare the barrels of your gun with this one that burst," said Jack, "and you'll see that it's as I say, and as Lafe claimed, that this gun was only shot once this afternoon, and that was when it exploded in my hands."

Gilbert and the other members of the gun club inspected the weapons carefully.

"You're right," he admitted, in a low tone. "We've got to apologize to you, Lightfoot, for the work of one of our own men. But you'll believe, of course, that we didn't know anything about it, and never dreamed we had such a member in the club."

"Of course; I fully believe you knew nothing about it. But I wanted to prove to you that Lafe was right."

"I knew I was," said Lafe. "I'm only hoping the sheriff will get the rascal."

It was growing late in the afternoon now, and as the Cranford boys did not desire to remain in Cardiff overnight, they proceeded toward the depot, accompanied by Gilbert and one or two others of the club.

They found the sheriff there.

"He got away from me," he announced, "but I'll nab him yet. I've got men watching every train."

"You're sure he's Joe Teneriffe?" said Ray Gilbert, still loath to believe that any member of his gun club could be "wanted" by an officer.

"Sure? Don't I know it? I've been after him for a month, and had about given it up, when I got a tip that he was living in Cardiff. I came right over here, and after nosing around found a trail that led out to your gun club. Sorry he's a member of your club; but he's the man I'm after. And I'll get him."

Jack and his friends rather doubted the sheriff's ability to make good his words, yet they hoped he could.

And in that mood they started on their return to Cranford.

By this time most of the numbness had gone out of Jack's hand and arm, though there was a strange dead feeling in them still, and he found difficulty in picking up and holding anything with the fingers of his left hand.

But the hand and arm were there, unmangled, and he knew they would be all right and as good as ever in a short time.

He was thankful that he had escaped so easily.

CHAPTER X.

THE FLIGHT OF BUCKSTONE ROGERS.

Contrary to his wish, Buckstone Rogers found himself being carried toward Cranford, at about the time that Jack and his friends, after examining the exploded gun at the home of Ray Gilbert, had started toward the station.

Buck was in a car of a freight train.

He had run to the sidings where the freight trains stood, and, looking about there for safety, had climbed into a car of a train on a switch. It offered the only hiding place he saw, and time was precious just then, for his pursuers, headed by the sheriff, were closing in on him rapidly.

After crawling into the car, which was pretty well loaded with baled hay, Buck closed the door, shutting it as tightly as he could. Then he found a hole between a couple of the hay bales, and by tumbling a

third bale down on top of him, he formed a sort of pocket, where he lay cramped, yet quiet.

This hay car was visited by the sheriff, who stood upon the very bale of hay that covered Buck's body, adding painfully to its weight, yet he did not see Buck, and, coming out of the car, reported that the fugitive was not in it.

Buck heard this report and breathed more freely.

Even yet he did not venture to stir from his cramped and painful quarters. A great fear held him quiet. His hand and arm, from which the pistol had been struck by Jack's bullet, hurt him and felt filled with a pricking like that of nettles, with painful thrills running through it, like those received from an electric shock.

"Curse him!" he fumed.

He laid all his undoing to Jack Lightfoot, and to Jack's friend, Lafe Lampton; and he told himself over and over that when he found the opportunity he would "get even" with them.

When the diminishing sound of voices informed him that the sheriff and those with him were moving away, Buck got out from under that oppressive bale of hay.

He sat on top of the hay, and looked about. The interior of the car was dark.

"I'll have to stay in here till night, and then cut out!" was his thought.

He took a drink from the flask in his pocket, to steady his nerves, and felt better.

Some time later an engine backed the cars, with heavy thumpings and rumblings, and the train was drawn out upon the main track, and pulled away in the direction of Cranford.

Buckstone Rogers was glad to be going in any direction that took him away from that sheriff; but when, after sliding the door an inch, he discovered the direction of his flight, he cursed deeply again, seeing that he was going, as he feared, toward Cranford. He had hoped he was bound in the other direction.

The freight ran into a siding at Cranford, and here Buck escaped from the hay car, dropping to the ground, and sliding along the embankment, which shielded him.

Looking about, he saw he was just south of the old

fair grounds, where the boys had played ball so many times the past summer. Beyond the fair grounds, toward the north, lay Cranford Lake.

The time was now after sunset.

Fearing to go toward the town, and seeing that the fence would help him in concealing his movements, Buck made for the fair grounds.

Even in his partly intoxicated condition, it seemed a bit queer to him that he should be back here, at nearly the point where he had met Kate Strawn, and where, as he told himself, all his recent troubles had started.

It seemed even stranger to him, on turning the corner of the fence and hastening in the direction of the boathouses, to see again Kate Strawn, moving along the path by the lake.

Kate was with Brodie. They had been out for a sail on the lake, and Brodie was now pulling at his boat, to draw the bow up on the sand, intending to have the little craft taken to the boathouse later.

Neither Kate nor Brodie saw the skulking figure of Rogers, and Buck did not at first see Brodie. He thought Kate was alone there again.

As Buck skulked along, a crazy desire for revenge against Kate burst into a flame in his drink-heated mind.

"She was the cause of that!" he muttered. "She started the whole thing!"

He reached for his revolver, forgetting for the instant that Jack's bullet had struck it from his hand. He felt his hand tingle with the pain of that bullet shock as he made the movement, and he cursed again.

Still, he did not see Brodie. Kate, waiting for Brodie, walked slowly along the margin of the lake, looking off into the western sky, where the golden clouds were shining, though the sun was now out of sight. It was a beautiful vision, and Kate feasted her dark eyes on it, all unaware of peril.

Suddenly she heard a footstep by her; and, as she half turned a man darted at her, and his arms encircled her waist. He tried to put a hand over her mouth.

"If you scream, I'll murder you!"

Kate felt all her strength deserting her, for the suddenness of the shock made her weak; yet she screamed, faintly to be sure, yet loud enough for it to reach

Brodie; who, at the next moment, came jumping along the bank.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HEROISM OF KATE STRAWN.

Buck Rogers tumbled with Kate into a sandy hollow of the shore, just as she screamed; and at first Brodie did not see her, and began to call to her.

Buck, seeing that, though her eyes were filled with terror, she meant to scream again, closed his fingers round her throat.

Brodie came on at a quick run.

Choking Kate into half unconsciousness, Buck picked up a broken club, which was lying there, and crouched to spring at Brodie.

He sprang, just as Brodie's head appeared over the rim of the hollow. As he sprang, he swung at Brodie's head, with an oath ripping from his lips. Apparently he meant to kill Brodie, for his brain was then on fire with the thought of revenge, and he knew that Brodie had been one member of the party that had ridden him out of Cranford on a rail.

Brodie tried to evade the blow, but it struck him on the side of the head, after beating down the arm he threw up for protection, and Brodie fell to the ground like a bullock in the shambles.

Kate, half recovering from the effect of the choking, tried now to scream again, and to get on her feet. She saw Brodie lying there, and her heart was nerved by the sight. She tried to move toward Brodie, while the scream seemed to stick in her aching throat.

But again Buck Rogers caught her round the waist, this time with both hands; and, lifting her bodily, he ran with her toward the lake.

"Revenge!" was the word that throbbed in his excited and now half-unbalanced brain.

Kate struggled in his arms, and again screamed. He put his hand over her mouth, and then she so fought to get that hand away that he had to drop her. She started up, and he caught her again. She was but a girl after all, and excitement and terror unnerved her.

"I'll kill you!" he shouted, not seeming to fear now that he might be heard.

"Jack!" was the cry that escaped her.

It was strange that she should do so, but no doubt Kate recalled that other time, when Jack Lightfoot came bounding to her rescue. She shouted for Jack.

But Jack was not there.

Catching her again in his arms, in spite of her resistance, Buck Rogers carried her toward the boat which Brodie had pulled up on the edge of the sand.

Then, seeing a rowboat, which he knew better how to manage, he threw Kate into it, as if she were a bag of old clothing. He shoved the boat quickly into the water, and, grabbing up the oars, leaped in himself.

Kate Strawn returned to full consciousness again, when she heard the oars thump in the rowlocks and knew that the boat had been put into the water, and that this young fiend was bearing her away.

For a moment or so a great fear held her quiet, and she lay still, as if unconscious, in the bottom of the boat where she had been thrown.

Her head sang, her throat ached, and a choking lump which had risen there seemed to suffocate her. She recalled that sight of Brodie, stricken down, and perhaps dead. And she knew that in strength and cleverness she was no match for the young villain who now, with strong strokes, was sending the little boat through the water.

Yet Kate Strawn was not conquered. A woman's cunning began to come to her when a woman's strength had failed. She tried to still the trembling of her nerves and that awful throbbing of her heart. She knew that the boat was being sent rapidly out from the shore, and that if she did anything she must do it quickly. That great fear for Brodie, and her desire to go to him, was a greater stimulant than any fear of personal harm could have been.

So she lay quiet, trying to study the situation. She knew that an appeal to this brute for mercy would be useless. She feared him, and she loathed him. Where he was taking her she did not know. But she had recognized him as Buck Rogers.

Slowly, she lifted herself, nerving herself for the struggle.

"Hello! Coming to?" said Buck, in a grating voice.

She did not answer, but stared about, pretending that she did not know where she was.

She half rose in the boat, tottering, still staring as if bewildered.

He laughed hoarsely.

"Sit down!" he commanded.

"Where—where am I?" she gasped.

"My honey-bunch, you're with me, and don't you forget it!"

For the first time she seemed to see him, and stared hard at him, leaning toward him.

It was acting, very dramatic acting, and, under the conditions, finer than anything Kate had ever done on any stage.

"I—I—don't know you!" she whispered, pretending that her head was affected. "Are you Brodie?"

He laughed harshly.

But he was willing to humor her, until he got further away from the shore. He did not want any more of those screams.

"Yes, I'm Brodie."

She bent toward him still further, as if she really thought he was Brodie.

Then she gave a quick jump; and by her very quickness, and because he was so thoroughly unprepared for it, she tore one of the oars from his hand.

She stepped back a pace and lifted the oar, swinging its heavy blade at his head.

He threw up his hand and received the blow on the side of his arm. It was the arm shocked by Jack's bullet, and that blow made it tingle painfully again.

With a howl of wrath he dropped the other oar and tried to jump at her. He caught the oar she held, and jerked it out of her hands. Then he tried to reach her, putting out his fingers to again get her by the throat.

She was too quick for him. She had failed in her attempt to strike him down with the oar, and she knew she could not cope with him unarmed. There was but one other course for her, and she took it, leaping like a flash from the boat into the water, and shooting down out of sight.

Buckstone Rogers reeled blindly in the boat when he saw that, for it was most unexpected. He picked up the oar she had let fall, and found that he had lost

the other overboard. He had not time to get it. So he backed water with the one oar, and began to turn the boat round, for he was not anxious for her to drown.

He expected to see her head come up beside the boat.

It did not rise, though he looked over the side of the boat in anxious expectation.

"She's drowned herself!" he gasped; and a thought of what that meant, both for him and for her, came to him dimly.

"Drowned!" he gasped again. "Well, a woman always is a fool!"

Then he saw her head pop to the surface some distance away, and discovered that she had dived that distance, and, having risen there, was swimming for the shore.

Kate Strawn had not lived by Cranford Lake all her life without learning how to swim. But she had never gone into the lake when the water was icy, as it was now. Chains of ice seemed to have seized her, and even her heart almost seemed to have stopped its beating, pressed by an icy hand.

But she swam pluckily toward the shore, which was not so very distant, using all her remaining strength.

As she reached it, which she did while Buckstone Rogers was still staring at her as if he could not believe his senses, she rose to her feet and staggered toward the point where she had seen Brodie fall.

An exclamation broke from Buck's lips.

"Gee! I've got to get out of this; for she'll go to screaming again, and I'll have the whole town hot after me."

He began to move further out into the lake and into the gathering darkness, using the one oar as a paddle.

CHAPTER XII.

IN PURSUIT OF THE FUGITIVE.

Having alighted from the passenger train, which had drawn up at the station a few minutes before, and was now steaming on toward Tidewater, Jack Lightfoot and his companions were walking down toward the boathouses.

They were talking of their experiences at Cardiff,

and of Buck Rogers, but they did not dream that he was within miles of Cranford.

As they neared the boathouses they heard a scream.

It was a scream torn from the lips of Kate Strawn when she reached the spot where Brodie had fallen.

He had just staggered to his feet. Even in the dim light she saw blood on his face, and he reeled as he moved toward her.

Jack broke into a run, with the others at his heels, when he heard that scream.

"Something's wrong!" he cried.

A sharp run brought them to Kate's side.

She had an arm about Brodie and was trying to support him. She had forgotten her wet and chilled condition. Brodie, still faint and weak, sank to a seat on the sand, just as Jack and his companions came up.

Brodie knew what had happened and where he was, and he recognized Jack instantly.

"It was that hell hound, Buck Rogers!" he panted. "He knocked me down with a club, and——"

"And there he goes in a boat!" cried Kate, hysterically, pointing toward the lake.

Jack saw that she had been in the lake herself. Her teeth were chattering, and her wet clothing clung to her.

"You must be got home at once," he said, trying to speak steadily, though his heart was jumping. "Are you sure it was Rogers? He was in Cardiff to-day."

"Don't I know him?" sputtered Brodie, holding his aching head. "If I meet him again I'll kill him!"

"Kate must be taken home at once, and you, too."

"I'll go for a buggy," shouted Nat Kimball. "You try to catch that fellow."

"I'll go," said Jubal. "I can run faster."

He turned about as he spoke and was off at his best pace.

"Yes, don't—don't let him get away!" Kate begged.

Tom stayed to help Kate and Brodie, and so did little Nat; but Jack, Lafe and Ned sprinted for the shore, in the direction pointed out by Kate.

They could see nothing off on the water, for the darkness was increasing there and Buckstone Rogers had already taken himself out of sight by the quick use of that one oar.

"The town's got to be aroused," said Jack. "Ned, run back and get Kennedy and stir up the people."

Ned turned back.

"Into this boat," said Jack, pushing a light boat into the water, and leaping in, with Lafe following him.

"He'll keep along the shore, don't you think?" said Lafe, as he took up a pair of oars.

"More likely he'll strike straight across the lake."

"But he doesn't know the country over there."

"He knows there are woods over there, and he'll probably look for shelter in them. It's just a guess, though."

He settled his oars in the locks, and Lafe pushed off the boat; then the two pairs of oars, pulled by strong arms, sent the boat flying out into the lake, the rowers making no more noise than if they rowed with oars muffled.

It seemed like that proverbial search for the needle in the haystack, with the lake lying dark before them and their movements hampered by a lack of knowledge of the direction Rogers had taken.

But a guess is sometimes as good as certainty. It was so in this case.

Rogers, having pulled out for some distance, and then hearing an outcry on the shore which he could not see, had stopped to listen.

It was an unwise movement for him.

As he rested there, listening, wondering which direction he ought now to take, he saw a dark object move on the lake.

"A boat!" he gasped. "They're coming for me!"

He dipped his one oar with a splash and began to pull again, heading toward the middle of the lake.

The ears of Jack Lightfoot and Lafe Lampton were of the best.

They heard that splash, and from the sound they guessed that it had been made by an oar and not by a fish.

"Dead ahead!" Jack whispered, excitedly; and, straining his eyes through the darkness, he now saw Rogers' boat, and saw that rascal pulling heavily at the one oar, dipping it first on one side of his boat and then on the other.

"He's lost an oar, or started with but one," said Jack. "If that's Rogers, and I guess it is, we've got him!"

"Pull away!" said Lafe, fully as excited now as Jack. "We can run him down in no time, if he's got only one oar."

Glancing now and then over his shoulder, Jack headed the boat toward the boat occupied by Rogers; and so swiftly did he and Lafe send their light craft along that soon Rogers could be seen distinctly, though the darkness still made it impossible for them to recognize his person or clothing.

"Oh, it's him, I think!" Lafe grunted, as he strained at his oars. "It proves it, the way he's trying to get away."

"And he's making as much fuss as a screw steamer!"

"Only one oar, and he's excited, you know."

The boat shot on, bringing Rogers more clearly into view.

"Halt, there!" Jack called, for, in spite of Rogers' furious splashings, they were drawing now quite near.

The fugitive did not answer.

"He may be armed," suggested Lafe.

"Not unless he's got another revolver!"

"Better look out for him!"

In another minute the two boats were not a half-dozen lengths apart.

Jack again commanded Rogers to halt.

Rogers flung a curse at him.

"Lay her alongside!" Jack commanded, speaking to Lafe.

Under the propulsion of the powerful rowers, the pursuing boat leaped up to, then drew alongside of, Rogers' boat.

Rogers sprang to his feet, wild with rage and fear.

"Take that!" he yelled, swinging for Jack's head with the oar.

Jack ducked under it, leaping for Rogers' boat, and it scraped his back, banging heavily against the side of the boat near Lafe's fingers.

Lafe brought the two boats together, and caught hold of Rogers' boat to steady it.

Rogers swung at Jack with his fist, and, missing, tried to step backward.

As he did so he stumbled and went overboard.

"Hold hard!" Jack yelled. "He's in the water."

It was an icy plunge, like that taken by Kate.

"Hold hard!" Jack called to Lafe again.

He bent over in Rogers' boat, lying almost down in it.

Then Rogers' head came into view. He was chilled, and he was half drowned, for he was not the swimmer Kate Strawn had proven herself.

Jack caught him by the hair—his cap had floated off—and drew him to the side of the boat, lifting his head out of the water.

"If you want to drown, go to threshing around; but if you want to live keep still a minute. Here, Lafe!"

Lafe scrambled into Rogers' boat, holding the boats together with his feet.

Rogers had stopped his threshing. A deathly dread of drowning had driven away every other fear.

It was a difficult task, but Lafe and Jack drew him at length into the boat, dripping wet, and so nearly frozen that his teeth were clicking together.

"Let up on me!" he whined, thoroughly cowed.

"Let that boat tow behind," said Jack, speaking to Lafe.

A minute later he and Lafe were taking their prisoner to the land.

Rogers expected a lynching, remembering the manner of his exit from Cranford.

He did not get that; but he did get a term in the penitentiary, for the sheriff came for him, and he was sent up on that old charge of burglary.

Other charges could have been laid against him, but that was enough.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 41, will be "Jack Lightfoot's Touch-Down; or, A Hard Nut to Crack at Highland." Here is another lively football story, just the kind you're looking for—a story in which a great football battle is waged and there is something doing from start to finish. Highland possessed one of the best elevens in the league, and you'll realize that the Cranford boys had a hard nut to crack, if they expected to win.

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (H.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases." No. 27, "Coaching and the Coach." No. 28, "How to Umpire." No. 29, "How to Manage Players." No. 30, "Baseball Points." No. 31, "How to Make a Cheap Skiff." No. 32, "Archery." No. 33, "Cross-Country Running." No. 34, "The Game of Lacrosse." No. 35, "The Boy With a Hobby for Collecting." No. 36, "Football, and How to Play It." No. 37, "A Practice Game." No. 38, "How to Play Football—Training." No. 39, "The Men in the Line."

THE MEN BEHIND.

Last week we considered the make-up of the line, quoting the criticism of Walter Camp, the star football coach, on the men he chose for his All-America team last season. This week we shall turn our attention to the men behind the line.

Of Smith, the star Pennsylvania man, whom Camp selects for full-back, the coach says: "Smith, a first-class ground gainer, strong on his feet, splendidly built and weighing close to one hundred and ninety pounds, has been invaluable to his team. In plays assaulting the line, even when Smith was not the runner with the ball, his interference and aid to the runner have been particularly strong features, and have rendered the work of his comrades far more effective."

"It was possible to send Smith at any point of the opponent's line, with proper protection, and Smith has been quite equal to doing the rest. But, for all that, Smith's defensive work was his most valuable asset to the Pennsylvania team. Taller than Hurley, of Harvard, and twenty-five pounds heavier, playing behind a light center, he would throw himself into a play coming with heavy interference at the middle of the line, and actually stagger it with the force of his impact, and many times seize the runner himself and turn him back for a loss."

For half-backs, Camp selects Hurley, of Harvard, and Heston, of Michigan, and refers to them as follows: "Hurley, the captain of the Harvard team, stood out as conspicuously as any man in the back-field. He it was who made it possible for Harvard many a time to stave off the attack of Yale, and his individual work probably reduced the score at least a half in that contest. In fact, his defense was unequalled."

"In offensive work, in spite of the great amount of labor he was called upon to perform when the opponents had the ball, he was a good ground gainer, fought for all the distance that could be squeezed out, and was a hard man to stop. Nor was he the type that must play an individual game or nothing. He followed his interference whenever it was given him closely and consistently, and never left it unless it had been brought to a standstill and he was thrown upon his own individual resources. He showed unsurpassed endurance in games where his team was thrown on the defensive, and his ever-ready ability to see the breach before it came, and put himself in the position to be of the greatest assistance, was stronger than that of any back of the year."

"Heston, of Michigan, gained more ground than any other back on the gridiron. Weighing over one hundred and eighty pounds, able to run one hundred yards in less than ten and two-fifths seconds, compactly and muscularly built, practically unhurttable, as his record shows, he went through his season in spite of the fact that all opponents knew it was Heston who was to be feared and so concentrated their defense upon him."

"Every now and then we see a half-back who occasionally makes use of his arm to ward off tacklers, and a murmur of approval goes up from the old coaches along the side line. Heston invariably used his arm whenever any advantage could be obtained by it, shifting the ball when necessary; and once well started and through a line it was almost impossible to stop him save by getting behind that arm."

"In defense he was quite as strong as on attack, picking his man cleanly, ready to leave his foot and shoulder in when necessary, and ever vigilant. His speed in starting, as well as when in motion, is greater than that of any other half-back of the season, which gives him additional advantage. Heston is a man who never gets headed back. He is always pounding along toward the opposite goal, seems proof against injury, and, in the Chicago game, carried the ball himself for approximately two hundred and forty yards of ground, being called upon thirty-eight times in that game. This would make his average something over six yards."

There is an old saying, "It's the little things that tell," and although it is certainly a stretch of the imagination to call those husky bunches of nerves who play quarter-back "little things," still they are small compared with the other men on the team, and on them frequently more depends than on any other member of the fighting force. Some of the greatest men of the game have been quarters, notably Daly, of Harvard, who, a few years ago, by the skill of his own playing and the brilliancy of his generalship, not only put his team at the top of the score list, but also earned for himself the fame of being perhaps the greatest football player that ever appeared on the gridiron. Quarter is usually the signal man; quarter frequently plans the play; quarter must then be an especially able and brilliant player as well as possessing the requisite skill and nervous force the position demands.

Camp selects for this position Stevenson, of Pennsylvania, who, he says, "proved himself indisputably the star quarter-back of the year. His brilliant running, had that been his entire stock in trade, might not have fairly classed him as the best man in the position, because if that were the case, his value to the team might have been equally conserved by playing him at half-back."

"His work, however, in passing the ball, directing the plays, successfully mastering the starting signal, and, in fact, all the requisites of a good quarter, not forgetting a most important feature, namely, his ability to handle punts in the back-field, all combined to give him a right to the place even without his running."

"In almost every game of the year this brilliant player would, when his team had failed to gain the required distance, bring off one of his effective runs, netting not only the required distance, but many yards besides, and oftentimes bringing a touchdown within the realm of possibility, when at the time he essayed the play it might look well-nigh hopeless. He is a fearless, almost a reckless,

(Continued on page 30.)

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

Let me congratulate you on the extra fine stories which you publish in ALL-SPORTS. Since your first issue, I have been a constant reader. I think it is a very good plan to have "A Chat With You" on the last page. As for the characters, Jack and Tom Lightfoot are not comparable by any weekly yet published. Wilson Crane is a very poor one, but there must be all sorts to make a good story. Jubal Marlin, as a money maker, is there with the goods. Lafe Lampton is certainly an apple eater; he has as big a heart as he is large. Nat Kimball is also coming to the front. Well, I hope to see this in print, but there is a question I would like to ask you, before I close, about my build. I am 5 feet 10 inches and weigh 138½ pounds. I would like to know if I am anywhere near correct in build. Please tell me how I can build up right. I believe I am a little light for my age and height. I am sixteen years of age. Well, I hope that I have not taken up too much room, and that this does not go where I think it may. I remain,

KENNETH H. COTTON,

1407 Q Street, Lincoln, Neb.

Your letter was welcome, for we are always pleased to hear from our boys. Your weight is considerably below what it should be for your size—one hundred and fifty-five pounds. But then, as you are only sixteen years old, no doubt you have been growing very fast, which would account for this. Don't worry about it. No doubt you will begin to fill out after a year or two, and make a fine big man. Take sufficient athletic exercise, avoid those things which your good sense tells you are harmful, keep a clean mind in a clean body and nature will do all the rest.

As I have read all of the numbers of your fine weekly, ALL-SPORTS, I take the liberty of writing a few lines. I wrote before, but my letter has not been published as yet in the Chat columns of your fine weekly.

I like Jack Lightfoot best of all of the "fellows." Jack knows his business, when it comes to pitching and managing a baseball team.

Then comes Tom, Jack's fine, manly cousin, a cousin I would be proud to own. He is made of the right stuff when it comes to playing ball, and is the right man in the right place on second. Reliable "Old Loaf" Lampton is a friend people would, or should, be glad to get. He is a fine catcher and batter, but it does not give him the swelled head, as it does Delancy Sheldon, because he has money and a red automobile, or "Red Devil," as they are called.

I think Phil is all right when it comes to playing ball and doing anything else, only he is jealous of Jack—which he should not be—and likes to make "grand-stand" plays.

I like the rest as they come. Only I like Nellie Conner best out of the girls, and think she is the one for Jack.

Jack has a very fine sister, and I only wish she would be mentioned more in these stories.

I like the baseball stories best, but enjoy the others nearly as much.

I must close now, with three cheers for Mr. Stevens and the Winner Publishing Co.

Hoping to see this in print, I remain,

"A READER."

Chicago, Ill.

Please tell me how these measurements go: I am just 15 and stand 5 feet 10½ inches. I measure around the chest, 41 inches, normal, and about the waist, 32 inches. Calf, 16 inches; thigh, 22 inches; hips, 37 inches. I know I am rather large for my age, but it runs in our family to be big. I weigh 162 pounds. I am a regular reader, and like your weekly very much.

Nashville, Tenn.

"JUMBO."

You are just immense, and we do not think you could have picked out a better name than the one you sign. If you weigh one hundred and sixty-two pounds at fifteen years of age, we wonder how you will tip the scales ten years hence. You do not ask how to keep your weight down, so we presume you are philosophical about it, and enjoy good health. And since, as you say, it runs in the family to be of generous proportions, you would no doubt be foolish to try and go against the decrees of nature. Some of our brainiest men are large in build, such as Cleveland and Taft. We hope that your mind, like theirs, may develop in proportion to the increase of the body, and that in due time you may become, not only big in body, but big every way, with a generous disposition. Big men are usually good-natured, which is a wise dispensation of Providence.

Would you please tell me what you think of my measurements? I am a regular reader of your ALL-SPORTS, and while I take two other libraries devoted to athletics, somehow I always read ALL-SPORTS first. The Chat pages are full of good things, and I never miss reading a line. My height is 5 feet 4 inches and weight, 113 pounds. Chest, normal, 33 inches; inflated, 36 inches; hips, 32 inches; calves, 13 inches; thighs, 19 inches.

Oxford, Ohio.

TOM BROWN, OF OXFORD.

Your weight is all right; in fact, from your measurements, we are inclined to believe that you are built just to order, since they agree very well with the average for one of your height. And those lungs of yours must be pretty good bellows to increase your measurements three inches when inflated. Few young fellows could do that, we imagine. We suspect that you must have called it normal when you had deflated your chest to the utmost. Still, you have reason to be proud of your lungs.

I want to ask a few questions, as I am a regular reader of ALL-SPORTS. First of all, let me congratulate you on getting out such a splendid paper in so short a time. Others that have had many years the start can't beat ALL-SPORTS in regard to contents and general interest. The stories are all a fellow could ask, thrilling enough, without bordering on the sensational. Then the principles brought to the front are just fine. I have felt considerable of an influence in my own life, just from reading this weekly, and I guess other boys could say the same if they were asked. I also enjoy the Chat very much, and I'm glad to see that so far there has been no bickering and quarreling, such as may be found in other sheets—the whole ALL-SPORTS family seem to be of one mind, and that is that the stories are fine, the characters interesting and the morals up to the mark. But before I forget it, about those questions: 1. Do you expect to take Jack and his friends away from Cranford? I notice that other writers do with their characters, even swinging around the country playing ball with big teams. 2. Will you ever have more matter in the stories, for they seem rather short to me? 3. Can I get all the back numbers of your publication? Please answer soon in the Chat columns.

J. B. KENNEDY,

Lawrence, Kan.

1. That is something for the author to decide. In due time you will learn just what his plans may be. Meanwhile, possess your soul in patience, and enjoy what he is so cleverly giving you—a weekly feast.

2. Not that we know of at present. We endeavored to have the author write more, and offered inducements; but he said he could not undertake it and continue to turn out conscientious matter as at present; so we concluded that we preferred the stories to hold their present standing, and we fancy our readers do also.

3. Yes, all back numbers are in print.

I am a great admirer of good old reliable Lafe Lampton. Somehow, whenever he comes on the scene, there's always something doing. Lafe is good-natured and fat. He has his lovely appetite along with him at all times. Nothing ever takes that away. And say, he's all right when it comes to swinging Old Wagon Tongue for a three-bagger just at the right time, throwing the hammer further than anyone within fifty miles of Cranford, and in playing his part in football. I'd like to run up against old Lafe. I guess we could make a jolly good team of chums, for he's the right stuff for a fellow to tie to when it comes to camping out and on the trail. Have Mr. Stevens coax Lafe to come out to the wild and woolly West, and I promise you I'll induce him to go in double harness with me if I have to rope him and kidnap the boy. Your stories are all to the good, Mr. Editor. I like them a heap. Many a one I've read sitting by the fire on the ranch, and I hate to get to the end the worst kind. I'm inclosing a subscription for one of the boys with this. He likes them just as well as I do. Well, so long, and good luck to the man who writes the ALL-SPORTS stories. He's sure a dandy. I'm visiting here, but my regular address is the same as before.

Santa Fé, N. M.

TERRY MCINTYRE.

It is a pleasure to get a breath from the great cattle ranges occasionally. Every little while we are surprised to learn of the far-off, sometimes out-of-the-way, places that ALL-SPORTS goes to. If it keeps on it will have a world-wide circulation presently.

I wish the baseball stories could be kept up all the year round, but I suppose some other fellows would be kicking then. They were just corks, though. I don't believe a writer of boys' stories lives to-day that is the equal of Mr. Stevens in describing a game of ball. My, but they were grand. I used to get so interested that I was glued to my chair until I read the last word. And I couldn't be chased to bed, either. Once I did go, and in consequence tossed around and couldn't get a wink of sleep until I got up and lit a lamp, so I might read the last two chapters. When I found Jack and his Cranford club won out in the lucky ninth, I just found myself relieved, crawled back into bed and slept as soundly as a baby. Please tell me how my measurements run. Age, 15 years; height, 5 feet 3 inches; chest, 30 inches; calves, 13 inches, and around the waist, 27 inches.

Charlotte, N. C.

A TARHEEL BOY.

We are glad you seem to be so fond of Jack, but we hope this eagerness to read of his adventures and victories may not interfere with any of your home or school duties. When a lad has faithfully performed what tasks are expected of him, he should be allowed a certain time for healthy recreation. It is wise to keep your ALL-SPORTS for a rainy Saturday, or some such time, when you can do little else; though we doubt very much if many boys can resist the temptation to read their favorite paper as soon as received. Your measurements are not far from the standard—a little too much about the waist, as is natural for a boy who likes the good things of life.

I have read every number of ALL-SPORTS up to the present time, and I think they are just fine. I hope they always will continue, because such stories are not easy to get. Of course those in ALL-SPORTS are all right, otherwise Mr. Stevens would not write them. They teach boys new and good things, and are very cheap at that. Lafe is a dandy; so is Jubal. I think Tom, as the bookworm, will have plenty of use of what he has

read in foreign lands; for did not the editor drop something about the boys later on being in strange lands? Wherever they may be, you can be sure that I, and many, many others, will follow their adventures with high-pitched interest. With best of luck to Mr. Stevens and the publishers,

NED PADDLE.

Tacoma, Wash., the city of beautiful homes.

It is highly probable that ere long Jack and some of his companions may leave Cranford for a short spell, and see a bit of bracing sport under other skies. At least, events seem to be shaping themselves very much that way, and if such proves to be the case, you may surely anticipate a series of very interesting stories, differing in many respects from those that have gone before.

("How to do Things")—Continued from page 28.

tackler, but he does not fail, and seems, at any rate in actual games, immune from injury. He steadies his men, gives them all they want in the way of good passing, and never, no matter in how tight a position, does he let them see him at a loss."

The importance of an always dependable man at quarter cannot be overemphasized. To him falls the task of starting the play and, usually, of deciding the right play at the various stages of the game. He must, therefore, be a good strategist and thoroughly understand, not only the game, but the strength and intelligence of the opponents as well. It is understood, of course, that in football, as well as in other and more serious affairs, "two heads are better than one." The quarter must confer with the captain and with his most experienced players. But it is finally up to him to start the play, and if he loses his head at any time, good-by.

For if he loses his head he will mix his signals, and without signals play is impossible. Signals must be simple and easily recognized by all the players; intricate signals are sometimes adopted in the hope that discovery will be rendered impossible. Such an effort usually defeats itself in the good old-fashioned way of the man who forgets the elaborate combination of his own safe. He made it elaborate so that no one might guess it, and when he himself forgot it—well, it cost him a good deal. Make your signals as simple as possible, and hit upon some other device to keep the opponents guessing.

Signals are usually arranged on a scheme of letters or numbers, or both combined. Every man on the team has a letter, or number, and every space between players is similarly designated, so that when a player hears his number called out by the quarter, and other letters designating spaces and other players combined, he understands that he is to take the ball and that the other players are to open a hole in the line for him, or are to act as interference or on a bluff play. Every team gets to thoroughly understand its own methods of play, and when the signals are heard the players should be ready to fall into their proper places.

In addition to the regular signals, special plays or tricks are usually designated by special signals. A certain number may mean a punt; another, a fake kick, the runner going round right end.

Signals are announced in series. Around one number, or combination of letters, are arranged various other numbers, which are inserted merely to conceal the signal. Either the first, second or third number is agreed upon as the key. Of course, care must be taken that none of the fake signals are misinterpreted and that every player understands where to find the key.

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